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President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 29 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/326)

Letter of the Secretary-General (A/56/422)

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): Last year at the Millennium Summit the heads of State and Government adopted the Millennium Declaration, whereby they pledged to uphold and promote the principles and goals laid down as the foundations of the Organization. The Summit and the Millennium Declaration became an outstanding achievement in the history of the United Nations. They provided us with a momentum in the new millennium that should be maintained through the active implementation of the guidelines unanimously endorsed by the leaders of the world.

The indefensible acts of terrorism perpetrated against the United States on 11 September severely undermined our hope that peace and prosperity would be important hallmarks of the new century. The new threats and risks which confront the global community have come to the fore. The measures we are taking now to find an effective and lasting solution to the grave challenge that international terrorism has defiantly issued to the world should form part of our overall efforts to resolve the problems of underdevelopment, increased poverty, economic strife and disease, and to create new relationships in the international community.

As previous speakers have done, I should also like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the road map document, which concisely and comprehensively outlines potential strategies for action that are designed to help us reach the goals and commitments embodied in the Declaration. We believe this document will help us in practical terms to combine our efforts to meet those lofty commitments. This year alone a number of events have marked the action-oriented approach of the international community towards the goals proclaimed. During this period the United Nations has organized five conferences and special sessions, and other meetings that are an integral part of the follow-up and implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The General Assembly special sessions on HIV/AIDS and Habitat and the Conferences on small arms and light weapons and on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, represented bold steps towards resolving the various problems affecting humanity and constitute concrete measures in the implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration. We believe that the United Nations, and each Member State, should continue to demonstrate its determination to achieve all the goals embodied in this document.

We are pleased to note the Secretary-General's emphasis in the road map on the need to intensify collective efforts to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters. In this connection, I

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cannot but mention that although 15 years have passed since the Chernobyl disaster, the problem of eliminating its consequences is still acute in Ukraine and presents a serious obstacle to achieving the goal of sustainable development. The socio-economic, medical and environmental problems associated with the Chernobyl disaster have continued to exist since the closure of Chernobyl's nuclear power plant. We believe that taking into consideration the long-term nature of these consequences, the United Nations should continue to coordinate international activities to study and mitigate the consequences. The delegations of Member States affected by the Chernobyl disaster will submit a draft resolution on the strengthening of international coordination and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster under the relevant agenda item. I should like to take this opportunity to appeal to all our partners to support the draft resolution.

We fully share the opinion that it is vitally important to ensure that the millennium development goals become national goals and serve to increase the coherence and consistency of national policies and programmes. While primary responsibility for creating the necessary domestic environment rests with the sovereign nations themselves, we believe that increased international cooperation and dialogue are needed to assist developing countries and countries in transition to respond adequately to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

One such challenge of a global dimension faced by the international community at the beginning of the new century is the transformation of the globalization process into a positive driving force, and ensuring that the benefits of this phenomenon are made available to all. Another is the fight for the eradication of poverty, which feeds political and social instability, criminality, terrorism and the degradation of nature. The problem affects all countries, is on the agendas of all Governments — even in prosperous nations — and requires solution at a global level. We share the view that the United Nations, with its universal mandate and unique potential, has a leading role to play in implementing the Millennium Declaration goals. Ukraine, as a newly elected member of the Economic and Social Council, stands ready to actively participate in and contribute to the work of that principal United Nations organ, which plays a central role in coordinating the Organization's efforts in the economic, social and humanitarian fields.

Making the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security is another important task before us. We share the view of the Secretary-General that conflict prevention is a complex issue that cannot be implemented in isolation from policies in the development, security, political, human rights and environmental areas, and that

> "Effective conflict prevention strategies need to be based on a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach, tailored to the unique circumstances of each situation." (*A/56/326, para. 36*)

I should like to focus my statement on some key proposals made by the President of Ukraine, Mr. Leonid Kuchma, in his statement at the Millennium Summit, in particular, "to develop a comprehensive strategy of the United Nations for conflict prevention .. based on a large-scale use of preventive diplomacy and peace-building". (*A/55/PV.5, p. 10*)

Ukraine is of the view that it is upon that premise that the peacekeeping strategy of the United Nations and its Member States should be built.

It is satisfying to us to know that the issue of conflict prevention has been increasingly touched upon by the Secretary-General and the Member States. We welcome the Secretary-General's report in document A/55/985, which reviews the progress achieved over recent years in developing the conflict prevention capacity of the United Nations system, and spells out specific recommendations on how to enhance it further in cooperation with Member States. In our view, that document represents a remarkable step forward in making the United Nations potential for conflict prevention more effective and moving the Organization from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.

We also welcome concrete steps made in this regard by the Secretariat by applying a long-term vision of prevention in addition to the traditional political and military conflict prevention activities. We feel sure that the establishment of regional centres of conflict prevention, where appropriate, will enhance the United Nations capacity to monitor and assess existing and potential trouble spots in the world. We think that their purview could include monitoring developments in inter-ethnic relations and timely detection of the separatist tendencies that are usually one of the major causes of conflict.

I should like to commend the Secretary-General for his proactive approach to the implementation of the decisions of the Millennium Summit. We welcome his idea of annual reports on progress in fulfilling the millennium commitments. The idea of a comprehensive report to be prepared five years after the Millennium Summit also deserves our full support. We are looking forward to working closely with other delegations in achieving the goals and commitments made by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration at the beginning of a new millennium.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the United Nations Millennium Summit in September last year, it has become an important task of the United Nations and the international community to achieve the series of goals set by the Millennium Declaration. Over the past year the United Nations has dedicated itself to strengthening its peacekeeping capacity. It also held a series of important meetings on issues such as the human habitat, HIV/AIDS, children, small arms, and racism, thus starting the process of implementing the follow-up to the Millennium Summit. The road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration submitted by the Secretary-General has set out strategies for moving forward towards all these goals. We express our appreciation of his efforts in this regard.

However, at present the pace of the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit falls far short of the requirements of the various goals in the Millennium Declaration. The events of 11 September have demonstrated that terrorist, separatist and extremist forces are an increasingly grave threat to both national and international peace and stability and even to economic development. But it will be a long, complex and arduous task to totally destroy the breeding ground of terrorism, separatism and extremism. The United Nations needs to redouble its efforts to strengthen the implementation of the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration. If progress can be made towards solving global issues such as poverty, regional conflict and sustainable development, it will be beneficial both to the strengthening of international cooperation against terrorism and to peace and development the world over.

Over the years the United Nations has set many development goals. Few of these, however, have been implemented. The Millennium Declaration has also set a series of goals in this respect, which embody the solemn commitment of leaders of all countries. The United Nations should take as its overriding current priority the realization of these development goals and formulate concrete, feasible implementing plans and methods with clear time frames in accordance with the specific realities and actual requirements of developing countries.

The two important meetings on development to be held next year — the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development — should face up to the reality that economic globalization has resulted in widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Developed countries should take concrete actions to fulfil their commitments and help developing countries rid themselves of poverty through practical steps such as providing increased official development assistance, providing debt relief, transferring technology and improving the market access of the developing countries. Also, the World Trade Organization will launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. We hope that this round will take into full consideration the concerns and interests of developing countries and become truly a round enhancing development, or a round for development.

This year African leaders have formulated the New African Initiative, taking an important step towards the realization of African economic and political integration and sustainable development. At the same time, however, we should realize that Africa still faces a host of special difficulties. To attain its goal of sustainable development, Africa will have to achieve an average annual growth rate of 7 per cent for the next 15 years. We hope that the United Nations will play a bigger role in helping to meet the special needs of Africa. We appeal to the international community, developed countries in particular, to make a positive response to the Secretary-General's recommendations and make substantive efforts to alleviate the special difficulties of African countries.

China has always supported African countries in their efforts to maintain national stability, promote economic development and realize social progress. China attaches great importance to strengthening its cooperation with African States. Since the China-Africa Forum on Cooperation held in Beijing last year the Chinese Government has made specific arrangements with relevant African countries for the implementation of the cooperation plan between the

two sides, including fulfilling China's pledge to forgive a total of 10 billion RMB yuan of their external debt.

As a developing country itself, China also has problems that are crying out for solution. Still, we are committed to continue to help Africa, within our capacity, to achieve its development goals.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): At the outset, my delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for preparing the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. We are grateful that he has suggested possible strategies and actions to meet the goals and commitments in the Declaration.

I shall focus on a selected number of goals and the corresponding strategies in the road map. However, that should not be construed as prioritization of their importance, for all the proposed strategies in the report are, in the final analysis, interconnected and mutually reinforcing. As the report notes, many of the problems and issues addressed by the Millennium Declaration need to be tackled simultaneously across a broad front.

At the same time, the proposed strategies should not be viewed as exhaustive. The road map should be sufficiently flexible. Particular strategies may require adjustments through time, or new strategies may be needed to suit changing circumstances and needs. More important, however, is the necessary political will and commitment to implement any proposed strategy. We know what has to be done. But translating these strategies into action remains the biggest challenge for each nation and the international community.

At the beginning of the century humankind is faced with both traditional and non-traditional threats to global peace and security. In the latter category fall transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, money-laundering, trafficking in humans and terrorism. The horrors of 11 September add more urgency than is suggested in the road map for States to sign, ratify and implement the conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, and also for States to develop and adopt corresponding laws and administrative procedures at the national level. We must supplement the courses of action in the road map with other tools and instruments to fight terrorism.

On conflict prevention the Secretary-General has advanced a number of strategies aimed not only at improving our ability to address the root causes of conflict and improve coordination among United Nations bodies, but also to create a culture of prevention. We subscribe to a number of the Secretary-General's recommendations in this field. Nevertheless, it is important that conflict prevention measures be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and be sensitive to the historical background of the situations under consideration.

The strategies set forth by the Secretary-General to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, through the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other weapons conventions, have never been more relevant. We must continue to work for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and NPT. The Secretary-General's proposal to support the efforts of civil society to eliminate weapons of mass destruction should also be heeded. We also support the convening of an international conference devoted to disarmament.

The successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a bold step in the right direction. We welcome its Programme of Action and look forward to the review of its implementation in two years.

The Millennium Declaration stresses the need to overcome the obstacles that developing countries face in mobilizing resources to finance their sustained development. We must therefore make every effort to ensure the success of the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development. The strategies on international trade proposed in the report of the Secretary-General, such as ensuring that developed nations fully comply with Uruguay Round commitments to improve market access for developing country products, the elimination of trade barriers and ensuring that the next round of trade negotiations fully takes into account the needs and priorities of developing countries, provide a good basis to enhance the global benefits of international trade. Debt relief for developing countries remains an essential component of any development package. We agree with the Secretary-General's proposals, especially with the need for donors to mobilize resources to finance debt relief. Developing countries also need greater access to global capital goods and markets. It is equally important, as stated in the report, that debt relief should be additional and not at the expense of other forms of development assistance.

At the same time, globalization as a process needs to be addressed. The highly uneven spread of its benefits should not condemn more lives to the margins. Globalization and adequate social safety nets are not incompatible. Appropriate strategies for this purpose should be included in any road map. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 must be implemented. Meeting the special needs of Africa, especially with respect to poverty eradication and sustainable development, is equally important. It is also our hope that the Rio + 10 Johannesburg Summit becomes the occasion for all countries to muster and commit the required resources to achieve the Rio goals.

Combating all forms of violence against women and implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are key goals of the Millennium Declaration. National efforts guaranteeing women equal access to education and social and health services are important measures towards meeting that goal. The Secretary-General's proposals to support State efforts to ratify and implement the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and continuing United Nations work on specific policies dealing with migration issues and their implications are equally important.

It is important to continue efforts to revitalize the General Assembly and streamline its working methods, rather than its work, in order to meet the Millennium Declaration's goals of enabling the General Assembly to reaffirm its central position as the chief policy-making organ of the United Nations. With respect to the reform of the Security Council, we support the Secretary-General's proposal on the need to continue to reform the Council's working methods. However, the deadlock on expansion requires a sincere search for a compromise solution. One can only support the Secretary-General's call for all States to pay their dues in full, on time and without condition in order to meet the Millennium Summit's goal of ensuring that the United Nations is provided, on a timely basis, with the resources it needs to carry out its mandates.

Finally, we support the submission of an annual report on the progress made in fulfilling millennium commitments, and a more comprehensive report every five years. The highlighting of particular themes for each year is attractive, but it should not suggest prioritization of attention to a certain issue to the detriment of others at any point in time. We also believe the General Assembly should have an appropriate role to play in selecting particular themes, should this approach be adopted.

Mr. Stańczyk (Poland): Let me first express the appreciation of the Polish delegation to the Secretary-General for his very comprehensive and useful report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration". The report can help us, the Member States, in identifying the best strategies and actions that can be chosen to fulfil the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration. It should be noted, however, that the report was prepared prior to the tragic events of 11 September and that our discussion takes place on the heels of the general debate. Both circumstances should be kept in mind when considering the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit.

Before turning to the issue before us today, I should like to make some remarks on the Declaration itself. The United Nations Millennium Declaration firmly stands as a strong and visible milestone on our common road towards the prosperity and well-being of mankind. World leaders have already spoken — in the Millennium Declaration — with very resolute and lucid language and with determination and certainty. Commitments have been taken up. Not a single challenging problem of the contemporary world has escaped the attention of heads of State or Government. All of them are important and interconnected. The main message that our leaders have brought to the world in the Millennium Declaration is the following: that managing the world economy and social development, dealing with threats to international peace and security and promoting sustainable development are matters of the collective and shared responsibility of all States, international organizations, civil societies and individuals. Now the time has come for the practical implementation of those commitments. That is what the world is expecting. That is what the people deserve to get. We must not let the words dry up and public opinion find another example of a notable document never transformed into action. We need continuously to enjoy the confidence and trust of the peoples of the world, since that is crucial for our success and a necessary condition for building up a new spirit in international relations. The road map is ready. Let us get into the vehicle and start driving.

I turn now to some details and proposed goals to be achieved. I will concentrate on three: first, strengthening the rule of law, including taking action against international terrorism; secondly, the eradication of poverty; and, thirdly, human rights, democracy and good governance, in particular strengthening the capacity of all countries to implement the principles and practices of democracy and human rights. All the other goals are equally important, and we are of the view that all of them must be implemented expeditiously and vigorously without any exception. No priorities among priorities should be established since the Millennium Declaration is a comprehensive document of an integral character and must be implemented as a whole. Any selective approach to the implementation of the Declaration should not be welcomed unless it is justified by the limited resources or capacities of the particular country or countries involved.

In the light of the current developments in international relations and, in particular, the horrible acts of terror that challenged order, stability and peace on a world scale, upholding and strengthening the rule of law must be adequately addressed. Poland agrees that the legal framework in this field needs to be improved and further supplemented, but States should first adopt more effective and action-oriented policies in order to eradicate terrorism. Therefore, we must cooperate more closely and exchange information and data in order to prevent and combat terrorism. Combating it requires joint and coordinated action since acts of terror cross State borders and strike transnationally. Since terrorists and their supporters are mobilized and desperately committed to attack peace and stability, we must be mobilized and committed much more to protect our common values. International terrorism attacked us with fury and no moral or any other consideration. The lives of hundreds or thousands are meaningless for terrorists. Therefore, we strongly support the statement of the Secretary-General, contained in his report, that there is a need to take concerted action against international terrorism. Poland, for its part, is ready to act with its allies and friends, and with all other countries of good will, in order to destroy the forces of evil and to protect the safety of the world. We will not limit our efforts or slow down the process when the first effects become visible.

As the Secretary-General stated in his report, in order to significantly reduce poverty and promote development it is essential to achieve sustained and broad-based economic growth. The goal to halve by the year 2015 the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than $1 a day, was clearly stated in the Millennium Declaration. However, in the light of the projections made by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, attaining that poverty reduction within the prescribed time frame would be rather difficult, if not very unlikely. Poland is very concerned about that assessment. The Bank, making its well-grounded projection, warns us that the number of people living in poverty will increase, and if progress in life expectancy, school enrolment and child mortality is not achieved, the gap between the poor and rich regions of the world could widen significantly. Such a scenario calls for all States to do everything to accelerate growth and distribute the benefits of growth equitably. In this context, many changes seem to be necessary, such as structural economic reforms, the effective use of public resources, improvements in the services and infrastructure available to the poor and essential reduction of vulnerability. In the absence of those steps, progress will be much slower and many more people will, regrettably, join those who are currently enslaved in poverty. Responses to this real challenge must be given at both national and international levels. All policy makers must understand that accelerating economic growth and social development and improving the distribution of income and wealth are necessary in order to make concrete progress towards a substantial reduction of poverty in the world.

The new Government of Poland takes this responsibility very seriously. We are working hard at the national level, as well as with our partners, to address the issue in the most effective manner, taking into account, however, our limited resources. In mobilizing resources for development and achieving growth, the main role must be played by countries themselves, but they should not be left alone in their efforts. Donors and international agencies must support those who are trying to resolve their economic problems and showing their determination. The burden of debt for many developing countries and countries in transition represents an important obstacle to development. Therefore, effective steps to alleviate the debts of those countries must be taken.

The Polish commitment to democracy and human rights is well known. That is one of the canons of its foreign and domestic policy. Contemporary Poland continues to develop its long tradition of democracy,

tolerance and good government as a State of law. Poland will continue its engagement in promoting human rights and supporting democracy since it is convinced that universal and full enjoyment of human rights cannot be provided without a democratic form of government, and, furthermore, that democracy cannot flourish without developing good governance. Democracy is usually a natural way of organizing and governing a society. Respect for human rights, the rule of law, political openness, transparency, responsibility and accountability are fundamental. No one should be deprived, by any means, of inalienable human rights and freedoms.

The term "good governance" has been in use in the United Nations language for only a couple of years, mainly with reference to human rights. My delegation is proud to say that Poland was among those countries that introduced the philosophy and concept of good governance into the United Nations forum. This uncontroversial and attractive idea was welcomed with appreciation first by the Commission on Human Rights and later on by this Assembly. It must be pointed out that a clear and strong reference to good governance is contained in the Millennium Declaration. Poland is convinced that more systematic and comprehensive debate on this complex issue should also be carried out within regional bodies and organizations. The idea of good governance is helpful in bridging substantial gaps among members of the international community, and in bringing closer a variety of opinions, in particular in the human rights field. Being broad and flexible, it can accommodate different approaches and facilitate the emergence of common grounds for understanding.

The concept of good governance can also be very useful in a dialogue among civilizations. There is a lot of evidence how a lack of good governance can negatively affect development. At the same time, substantial interaction between human rights and equality of governance has been strongly confirmed. Those links and interrelations, which, by their very nature, are complex, deserve our further consideration and thought. It is a matter of fact that economic prosperity, including in terms of foreign investment and capital flow, flourishes and develops only in good governance environments. Since this is a vital question for many countries and regions of the world, it might be wise to suggest elaborating a set of universal good governance principles or guidelines for the economy too.

Some work on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration has already been done, but much more is still ahead of us. Visible and resolute action in order to implement the Millennium Declaration must continue to be our principal goal. The elaboration of indicators of progress in this respect might be a good idea. Let us look again at our capacities and resources, evaluate them and allocate appropriately, without any delay. We must bring new hope to those who are hopeless and do not see any chance of change. There is still a chance and we must not miss it — not this time.

Mr. Siv (United States of America): I was sworn in only one hour before the general debate began on 10 November. At the first opportunity I will come to you, Mr. President, to pay my respects and seek your wisdom. In the meantime, I wish you every success.

The Millennium Summit last year addressed many of the challenges the international community faces in our common effort to improve the lot of humanity everywhere. The United States commitment to addressing these challenges remains firm. Last year the fight against terrorism was one of many shared international goals. Sadly, 11 September magnified the importance of this goal. The great coalition against terrorism formed in these past weeks is a testament to the consensus that terrorism and civilization are not compatible. It is also a testament to the 5,000 innocent victims, who came from more than 80 nations. Terrorism is one aspect of the violence that hampers progress in raising living standards worldwide. Countries suffering from armed conflict have witnessed a dramatic, prolonged failure to meet basic human needs. Resolving conflicts depends primarily on the conflict participants themselves. However, the international community should also support their efforts to resolve conflict.

One of the pillars of United States development assistance is conflict prevention and resolution. We are a substantial contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, both financially and with personnel. We support NATO-led peace operations in the Balkans and the multinational force and observers in the Sinai. My country reaffirms its strong commitment to upholding human rights. The war against terrorism requires a renewed resolve to support democracy-building, judicial reform and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights for all. A world of democracy, accountability, opportunity and stability is a world in which terrorism cannot thrive.

One of the gravest threats to developing countries, especially in Africa, is HIV/AIDS. The United States Government fully supports the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. President Bush has pledged $200 million to the Fund, with more to follow as the Fund demonstrates success. He has also increased funding to our own bilateral programmes on HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases. We remain committed to supporting developing countries' efforts to eradicate poverty and to achieve sustainable development. The upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development will each address these twin priorities.

The best way to reduce poverty is through strong, sustainable economic growth. Such growth begins with solid national economic policies and institutions. National investment in human capital, particularly in health and education, is essential. Donors, development partners and multilateral organizations can only provide support. Whatever the level of resources available for development, there is not enough to waste, so aid must be used effectively.

In our interlinked world national performance is also influenced by global economic growth. Unfortunately, the short-term prospects for such growth, in particular in the aftermath of 11 September, are poorer than they have been in decades. That is why the United States worked closely with its trading partners, and in particular with developing nations, at last week's ministerial meeting in Doha to launch new World Trade Organization negotiations. Just three weeks ago President Bush met with trade, finance and commerce ministers from 35 African countries for the first meeting of the United States-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum. The President called the Forum a unique opportunity to build ties of trade and trust between the United States and Africa. He announced a new $200 million Overseas Private Investment Corporation support facility to promote our investment in Africa. President Bush praised the visionary African leaders who launched the New African Initiative. To fulfil this vision of progress, he stressed, we must return to the steady, patient work of building a world that trades in freedom.

The Global Development Alliance initiative of the United States Agency for International Development will create strategic alliances with such new partners as non-governmental organizations, private foundations, corporations, the higher education community and even private individuals. This will leverage significant resources, expertise and new technologies to address development challenges. With the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, the United States is a full participant in the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Twenty-four nations have now demonstrated the required commitment to poverty alleviation. They have begun to receive debt relief under the Initiative. President Bush has also proposed that multilateral development banks substantially increase the share of grants in their assistance to the poorest countries.

The road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration prepared by the Secretary-General contains many useful ideas, as well as some on which international consensus has not been reached. Each country must devise its own procedures for addressing the issues mentioned in the Declaration. The Secretary-General's road map can help that process. We look forward to Member States' consideration of the language in the newly formulated millennium development goals and the suggested indicators.

The challenges we face are immense. Yet we have seen how the international community can come together in a common cause. That is the hope that guides us into the future.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): At the outset, allow me to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General and Mr. Michael Doyle for publishing the Secretary-General's report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" in a timely manner. This road map report can be regarded as a good first step towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, as it provides useful guidelines for carrying out the lofty commitments embodied in the Declaration. The value of the report is further enhanced by the annex, entitled "Millennium development goals", which pinpoints concrete time-bound indicators that will be used to monitor progress towards eight development goals.

Last year the Millennium Declaration was adopted in a euphoric atmosphere, with Member States expressing high expectations for the future work of the United Nations. One year later, however, the optimism and political will mobilized at the Millennium Summit do not seem to be as vigorous. Therefore, the international

community needs to reaffirm its commitment to achieve the policy goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. In the light of the rocky negotiation processes for international conventions and the downturn in the world economy over the past year, the concerted efforts of the international community are required more than ever before. As the millennium report of the Secretary-General emphasizes, global issues, by nature, cannot be resolved by any one country. That was made all the clearer by the 11 September terrorist attacks. With a view to ensuring the successful implementation of the Millennium Declaration, we need to reaffirm once again that concerted efforts based on multilateralism are the most effective means of addressing the sundry challenges facing the international community.

Having said that, we appreciate that the road map report suggests a concrete strategy for moving forward towards each of the objectives and goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration. Many of these strategies, comprehensively compiled in the report, have already been under discussion or review within the framework of the United Nations system. Nevertheless, they will no doubt be useful in materializing the vision embodied in the Millennium Declaration. In particular, they can serve as a good guideline or benchmark for Member States, United Nations agencies and upcoming international conferences and events as they try to formulate policies at their own respective levels. The only part of the road map report that requires the endorsement of the Member States is the follow-up reporting system detailed in the last section, entitled "The road ahead". As part of the follow-up reporting process, the Secretary-General is expected to issue an annual report that deals with two different themes. If the intention is to have the annual report deal with two different themes with a view to expediting the follow-ups in a greater number of areas, we believe that two themes could be selected in such a way as to give the report more logical and practical coherence. We hope that Member States can hold further discussion on this matter on the basis of the proposal made in the section "The road ahead".

While basically concurring with the views and suggestions contained in the seven areas of the road map report, I should like to briefly comment on two areas in which we can take more tangible measures at the United Nations level: peacekeeping operations and the strengthening of the United Nations. First, in the field of peace and security, it is widely recognized that conflict prevention is the most cost-effective and politically sound means of ensuring long-term peace and stability. Therefore, the preventive capacity of the United Nations needs to be further reinforced. In this regard, it deserves to be mentioned that the working methodology of peacekeeping operations has been improved considerably over the past year in accordance with the recommendations of the Brahimi report. We hope that the peacekeeping operations capacity of the United Nations will be further expanded in the years to come.

Secondly, it goes without saying that the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration cannot be successfully carried out without strengthening the United Nations. According to the Millennium Declaration, the foremost policy objective in the field of strengthening the United Nations is to reaffirm the central role of the General Assembly and enable it to effectively play its role. With that end in mind, we hope that future United Nations debates can be conducted in a more practical manner. To make the debates more substantive, my delegation believes we should concentrate more on a critical review of past achievements. With regard to future debates on the annual thematic report, we are of the view that those debates should serve as a forum for Member States to report on their activities in the designated thematic area and share best practices and experiences. It is our hope that this new mode of debate can also be adopted in the debates on other agenda items.

That being said, let me briefly touch upon the actions taken by the Government of the Republic of Korea in the context of implementing the outcome of the Millennium Summit. In the spirit of joining the international effort to curb missile proliferation, the Republic of Korea became a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) last March. In addition, my Government has demonstrated its commitment to reducing the use of anti-personnel mines by acceding to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and accepting its Amended Protocol II. As part of the effort to strengthen the implementation of democratic principles through institutional reform and civic awareness, the Republic of Korea will host the second conference entitled "Towards a Community of Democracies" in Seoul next year. Furthermore, the Korean Government is making continuous efforts to increase its official development assistance and expand its participation in the donors' conferences.

Finally, I conclude by underlining the importance of inviting the engagement of the private sector and civil society in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. In this context, I should like to highlight the need for Member States to take specific measures to give widespread publicity to the Millennium Declaration and to increase the dissemination of information on the Declaration.

Mr. Kára (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the European Union statement presented by the representative of Belgium earlier today, and that allows me to confine myself to the few following remarks.

The Millennium Summit was an important milestone for the United Nations. It set up or reframed its agenda for the coming years and mobilized political support for its implementation. During last week's general debate the vast majority of delegations, including a number of heads of State, made references to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and to the process of the implementation of goals enshrined in the Millennium Declaration. The support of more than 14 months ago seems to be still in place, despite the almost empty General Assembly Hall this morning, which was not indicative of the fact that we were about to discuss one of the crucial strategic issues on our list.

We all know that the goals and targets of the Summit were not invented by the Summit itself but were taken from various global forums. In our view, the main added value of the Summit was consolidating our goals and targets into one package, thus securing more synergy in their pursuit. Is that happening? It may be too early to say, but let me quote Mr. Harri Holkeri, the President of the last session of the General Assembly, who is to be praised for taking a firm lead at a Millennium Summit full of activities. In his farewell statement he pointed out that the

> "Member States and the respective entities of the Secretariat seem to be unable to break the habit of viewing and considering different issues in isolation." (*A/55/PV.112, p. 2*)

Thus, coordination seems to be one of those areas where we need to further strengthen our efforts. In this regard, a major test before us will be the two conferences in the year 2002, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Mr. Holkeri delivered his statement on 10 September 2001. The following day we found ourselves in a different world, facing new ominous threats. The United Nations response to the terrorist attack on the United States of America has been prompt and resolute, reconfirming its pivotal role in handling global affairs.

Terrorism became overnight the overriding focus of our activities, and all Member States have stood unprecedentedly united in efforts to combat this evil. We spontaneously adopted — to use the words of Secretary of State Jack Straw of the United Kingdom — the agenda of 11 September. The scope of the change has been substantial. There was not much on terrorism in the excellent report "We the peoples" (A/54/2000) prepared by the Secretary-General for the Millennium Summit, and our commitment in the Millennium Declaration to take concrete action against international terrorism was just one among many others. Indeed, the issue of terrorism, mainly a topic for legal experts in the Sixth Committee, did not loom very large at that time. Last year's report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization did not touch upon it at all.

Today's core challenge is to combine our immediate priority of combating terrorism with our long-term strategies and goals endorsed by the Millennium Summit. We need to strike a balance between the agendas of 10 and 11 September, and even more importantly, to secure a symmetry of commitment to both tasks. We believe that the implementation of the long-term strategy guided by the Millennium Declaration can strongly benefit from the renewed unity and spirit of multilateralism. We hope that the same amount of determination with which we forged the anti-terrorist alliance will find its way into cooperation in other areas such as conflict prevention, poverty eradication, peace-building, demining, promoting democracy and human rights and protecting the environment, if only because all these areas are interrelated and, when neglected, can feed the roots of terrorism.

In another high-quality document, "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration", the Secretary-General rightly stresses that

> "What is needed ... is ... to demonstrate the political *will* to carry out commitments already given and to implement strategies already worked out." (*A/56/326, para. 7*)

We now know that such political will can be generated. Let us further explore this potential vis-à-vis the goals of the Millennium Summit.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, our appreciation for your leadership in convening this meeting.

The Millennium Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit clearly laid out the goals and tasks for the international community in the twenty-first century, and the "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration", which the Secretary-General presented in September, provided guidelines for pursuing them. Today I should like to present the Japanese Government's views on some salient issues stressed by the Millennium Declaration and the road map.

Combating terrorism, providing humanitarian assistance to the people in Afghanistan and the Afghan refugees, ensuring security and attaining political stability, social and economic rehabilitation and reconstruction in Afghanistan — these are the difficult tasks with which the international community has been preoccupied since 11 September. In addition, the situation in the Middle East is increasingly worrisome. From Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Kosovo and East Timor, the United Nations is faced with ever greater demands for peacekeeping. At the same time, the international community is confronted by a wide range of global issues, such as those relating to poverty, environmental degradation, refugees and displaced persons, public health, narcotic drugs and so forth. While each of them requires the cooperation of the international community, as the Millennium Declaration has stressed, two issues in particular demand our urgent attention: global environmental degradation, and HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

In the area of global environmental protection, a significant step was marked with the agreement reached at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on specific rules for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. It is now our responsibility to bring the Kyoto Protocol into force by 2002. The Japanese Government, for its part, has begun preparations to this end. At the same time, in order to ensure the effectiveness of measures for preventing global warming, Japan will continue its maximum efforts for the formulation of one universal framework for cooperation, with the hope that the United States and developing countries will participate in it.

Japan will also make its best efforts for the success of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which is to be held next year in Johannesburg. I should like to stress the importance of adopting at the Johannesburg Summit guidelines for international environmental efforts to promote the utilization of market mechanisms and innovative scientific technologies and to contribute to the resolution of multifaceted issues such as mega-city management and water issues.

In order to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, it is important for the international community to develop a well-coordinated approach to respond to the needs of each country in a wide range of areas, including education, prevention, treatment, establishment of sanitation systems, and research and development. To this end, the Japanese Government last year announced the Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative, under which it will extend over the next five years financial and technical assistance amounting to $3 billion to help combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in developing countries. Japan has also committed itself to contribute $200 million to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Recognizing that what the Secretary-General refers to as a "war chest" will be essential to combat these deadly pandemics, I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate my appeal for increased support for this Fund.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is beyond debate that, unless the problems stemming from conflict and poverty in Africa are effectively addressed, there will be neither peace nor prosperity in the world in the twenty-first century. With this recognition, since 1993 the Government of Japan has been promoting the process launched by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), with the aim of enhancing the ownership of the development process by the countries of Africa and their partnership with the international community. To further advance the TICAD process, in December of this year the Japanese Government will hold a ministerial meeting in Tokyo in order to prepare for TICAD III. The Government of Japan welcomes the

New Partnership for Africa's Development, launched by African countries. That is indeed a strong manifestation of the determination of these countries to assume ownership of their own future. We look forward to having a substantive discussion at the forthcoming TICAD ministerial meeting on how the international community can best support this initiative.

Equally important for the future of the international community is to realize a world in which children can develop and expand their innate creativity. The Japanese Government strongly hopes that the second World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, to be convened in Yokohama in December, will be fully productive towards that end and will contribute to a successful special session of the General Assembly on children next year.

In addressing these issues, which range from terrorism and conflicts to environmental degradation, infectious diseases and the future of children, it is crucially important to overcome poverty and, to that end, to promote development. The International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in March next year, is important in this context, for it can provide a significant opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its strong commitment to mobilizing financial resources and utilizing them efficiently and effectively for the cause of development. With this recognition, the Japanese Government will continue to work together with other governments concerned, in order to make the Conference a success.

Trade also plays an important role in the developing countries' pursuit of sustainable development. We welcome the agreement reached at Doha earlier this month that makes possible the launching of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization. Japan intends to actively engage in the new round, taking fully into account the importance of reflecting in the negotiations interests and concerns expressed by developing countries.

I should also like to underline here the importance of focusing our attention on human security, that is, protecting the life and dignity of people, as we address these global issues. Human security is the basic requirement of human beings, no matter where they live. It is our hope that the trust fund for human security, which the Japanese Government has established at the United Nations, will help to advance such a human-centred approach to global issues in the years to come. We anticipate that valuable contributions will be made to this end by the Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Mrs. Sadako Ogata and Dr. Amartya Sen, which has commenced its work with the strong support of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

I want to point out here that Security Council reform is another important issue stressed in the Millennium Declaration. Indeed, the debates at the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly clearly demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of Member States support Security Council reform, including the expansion of both its permanent and non-permanent membership. As I pointed out at the General Assembly's most recent debate on Security Council reform, on 30 October, developments in the international political situation since 11 September have entailed an expanded role for the Council, casting the issue of the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness in a new light. As a result, the need to accelerate efforts for Council reform is now more urgent than ever before. We must cooperate in order to move forward on this important issue. As I stated on 30 October, the Japanese Government considers it advisable to focus our discussions in the forthcoming meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the question of the size of the expanded Council as part of a focused step-by-step approach to a final reform package.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that whether we are able to achieve the various goals of the Millennium Declaration will depend to a large extent upon the efforts of each Member State. It is also important that the General Assembly and each of its committees, as well as the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, strengthen their efforts to achieve the goals of the Millennium Declaration. Indeed, there is already some encouraging progress in this context. For example, over the past year, such conferences as the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and the conference on small arms proved to be effective in promoting the efforts of the international community to implement the Declaration.

It is also becoming increasingly important for the United Nations to strengthen its collaboration with various international organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. There are, I might add, some remarkable developments in this direction as well.

The Japanese Government for its part will continue to participate in, and contribute to, such efforts of the United Nations with a firm commitment to realize the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing the sincere appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for providing us with the comprehensive report on proposed strategies, entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration". It should be of tremendous assistance in our deliberations now and a credible blueprint or plan of action for our future activities in cooperation for development.

The heinous terrorist events of 11 September in our host city and country have brought a new awareness of the interdependent and globalized nature of our world. We must seek to understand the root causes of these tragic events, particularly by coordinating our efforts to respond in a comprehensive way. In doing so, we must choose the path of engagement, dialogue and partnership.

It is precisely for these reasons that the Millennium Declaration, which represents a remarkable convergence of views on the challenges of the twenty-first century, is now more compelling than ever. Indonesia therefore commends the Secretary-General for his road map report and supports his comprehensive and coordinated approach. We believe it will lead us — the United Nations, Governments and all relevant sectors of civil society — towards mutual cooperation and partnership. It should greatly help in overcoming the formidable obstacles to peace and prosperity facing us all, while at the same time reinforcing the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Inevitably, the road map will complement the agreements and programmes already agreed upon during the major conferences and summits of the 1990s to achieve sustainable development. It is crucial that those agreements and commitments already in place should be implemented as a priority. That is why, as we look across the global landscape today, we have no doubt that combating terrorism is crucial for the future of peaceful coexistence between States.

It is also true that the multiple threats and challenges that were already preoccupying our intergovernmental deliberations before the 11 September attacks have not gone away. They are still with us. The threat of nuclear annihilation has not fully faded, despite the recent promising and very welcome disarmament negotiations. Nor can we neglect the daunting challenges of conflict prevention. In addition, inextricably linked to these issues of war and peace, are the issues central to advancing development — pervasive underdevelopment, marginalization and wrenching poverty. It is crucial that we vigorously pursue them through dialogue and partnership, not confrontation.

In answering these challenges, and especially in our efforts to revitalize cooperation for development and eradicate poverty, we must maintain a balance in addressing the issues of environment, social development and economic growth. A major means and mechanism that could be effectively used is that of building on the momentum and high commitment to sustainable development. In this context poverty eradication is central. Indonesia fully supports the target of the Declaration and the strategy in the road map report for halving the global poverty level by the year 2015. In following up this call there is a crucial need for country-defined initiatives including a focus on building human and institutional capacities at the national level.

The issue of sustainable development will also be part and parcel of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg in September 2002. To achieve a successful outcome at the World Summit we must reintegrate our global commitment to sustainable development through partnership at the highest level. For its part, Indonesia is committed to the success of the Summit, and the Chairman of the World Summit on Sustainable Development preparatory process is determined to do his utmost to ensure that the preparation of the Summit is successful. We are hosting the final session of the Preparatory Committee at ministerial level next May before the World Summit.

To move the process of sustainable development forward we must ensure the soundness of national policies. We thus welcome several of the guidelines set forth for human rights, democracy and good governance in section V of the road map. Since Indonesia is currently in the midst of building and strengthening its institutions for good governance, we appreciate and support the Secretary-General's call for good governance based on participation and the rule of law. We also support its strong focus on combating corruption and ensuring safeguards for private investment within each country. Indonesia supports the goal to respect and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to strive for the protection and

promotion of all human rights, including minority rights. We have recently signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, further strengthening our commitment to human rights. At the same time, we concur with the Secretary-General that "the gulf between commitments and concrete action must still be bridged". (*A/56/326, para. 197*)

Indonesia also welcomes the road map as a way to strengthen democracy. As was recently stated by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, speaking before the General Assembly "Indonesia today stands proud as one of the largest democracies in the world" (*A/56/PV.54*), and the challenge for us all is to ensure that democracy works and actually delivers a better life for all people.

Empowering the United Nations is an ongoing central task of the international community. It is also central to promoting people-centred sustainable development. A revitalized General Assembly and reformed Security Council designed to reflect the contemporary development of international relations are essential to the creation of a more democratic world. We support such strategies. With regard to reforming the Security Council, we should take into account the views of Member States. Indonesia also supports the continuing efforts to consider the size and composition of the Security Council, as well as its methods of work.

Nevertheless, if we are serious about translating rhetoric into action and reality, we simply must have the necessary resources to move forward. We believe that these resources must be commensurate with the tasks of carrying the mandates of the United Nations forward, including the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the strategies contained in the road map. The Organization must receive its financial contributions in a timely and predictable manner. We must, at the same time, be sympathetic to the situation of Member States that, due to genuine economic difficulties, are temporarily unable to meet their financial obligations.

In this context, we are concerned that despite the priorities approved in General Assembly resolution 55/233, some areas of activity outside of those priorities have in fact received growing resources, while the important area of international cooperation for development has seen only a modest amount of growth. Furthermore, the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, is uniquely designed to address and promote the overall global development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration. We should do our utmost to make full use of this opportunity to enable us to shift the paradigm in favour of development. Let me just add that the General Assembly has already decided to convene that International Conference, which has received the endorsement of the Millennium Summit. It thus seems to me we should now move beyond questioning the rationale of the Conference and instead focus on how best to achieve a successful outcome. I hope that the Secretary-General will be successful in bringing this important matter to the attention of all Member States.

Mr. Navarrete (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by recognizing the tremendous amount of work done by the Secretariat of the United Nations in preparing the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, an exercise to which all departments, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations contributed ideas, as did the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and representatives of civil society. The result of this collective exercise in evaluation and planning is a document that takes up the objectives of the Millennium Declaration and proposes a series of specific strategies to progress towards their achievement. The road map, the annual reports of the Secretary-General and the comprehensive progress report to be presented by the Secretary-General in the year 2005 are indispensable instruments for ensuring that Member States maintain their commitment to achieve the objectives of the Declaration so that we can measure the state of progress towards this end.

In the introduction to the road map the Secretary-General points out, as has been mentioned by previous speakers, that most of the objectives laid down in the Millennium Declaration were not new, but were taken from the world conferences held in the 1990s and the various international juridical instruments codified over the past 50 years. We cannot forget that precedent when we attempt to implement the Millennium Declaration, since any tentativeness in the commitment of the international community to achieve these objectives would detract from the seriousness and legitimacy not only of this important gathering but of half a century of work by the United Nations.

The road map also recognizes that "the problems facing humanity are closely intertwined, and that each tends to complicate the solution of one or more others" (*A/56/326, para. 3*). The tragic events of 11 September, and the signal that those events sent — with regard to the capacity of terrorist organizations to threaten international peace and security with such damaging effects on the world economy, particularly in the areas of trade, tourism and other services — are a clear example of this relationship. It is for that reason that the phenomenon of terrorism should not be treated in isolation; rather, in the course of considering strategies to combat it we should examine its causes and motives, as well as the link between terrorism and other transnational phenomena and actors that also constitute a threat to international peace and security, such as organized transnational crime, drug trafficking and money-laundering.

In this regard, I should like to refer to a statement made this weekend, at the meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Ottawa, by the Minister of Finance of India, who, in speaking of how the world has changed since 11 September said that today we are living in a more integrated world, with a greater awareness that both the developed and the developing countries must remain united, since exclusion, poverty, degradation, anger, violence and impatience, wherever they may exist, are a threat to peace and prosperity.

Recognizing that integration and interdependence of the various areas of national action and international cooperation is perhaps the most important feature of the road map proposed by the Secretary-General. In none of the seven areas considered in that road map will any substantial and irreversible progress be made if it is not accompanied by decisive movement in the same direction in the remaining areas, from peace, security and disarmament to strengthening the United Nations, passing through development and poverty eradication; protecting our common environment; human rights, democracy and good governance; protecting the vulnerable; and meeting the special needs of Africa.

In the first year after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration it is probable that the international community is moving further away from some of these objectives rather than closer to them. The simultaneous slowing down of economic activity in the major industrial economies and, consequently, in the world at large will probably mean for many countries a halt in the decline — or possibly even an increase — in the number of people living below the poverty line, thus making it more difficult to achieve the objective of halving, between 1990 and 2015, the number of people living below that line. The slower growth of the economy and world trade is also complicating the achievement of environmental objectives and is affecting social and political development goals. Sustained economic growth and development are essential prerequisites for progress along the lines proposed by the road map towards achieving the objectives of the Declaration.

From this standpoint the International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in March 2002 in Monterrey, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in September next year in Johannesburg, offer opportunities for returning to the path to more just and equitable development. Mexico, as host of the Monterrey Conference, trusts that the agreements and conclusions to be reached will facilitate the adoption of the strategies for progress suggested by the Secretary-General in the road map.

In the area of protecting the vulnerable, we must design and put into practice a strategy for progress aimed at handicapped persons. Their number, estimated to be some 600 million, would make up the third most populous nation on the planet. It is indispensable that this valuable contingent of human capital should be fully incorporated into society, overcoming the marginalization and discrimination from which they often suffer. A broad and integrated convention that protects and promotes the rights of handicapped persons would make it possible for this segment of the world population to contribute significantly to the achievement of the economic, social and political objectives laid down in the Millennium Declaration.

The international community organized, around the United Nations system, is confronted by the enormous responsibility of continuing to build for future generations a peaceful coexistence, beneficial to all and ecologically viable. Governments, multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations all have a road map for guiding our action in order to achieve a better life in the first decades of the millennium just starting. Only through all of us working responsibly every day will we achieve these goals. The United Nations is not an abstraction but is a

real reflection of what is wanted by those who make it up and what they are ready to make of it.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): The adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration last year by our leaders was a landmark achievement. The Declaration embodied within it our common aspirations for a better, more secure and more prosperous future for humankind, with 56 definite goals in seven broad clusters of activities.

If these were ordinary times we would have by now spent the better part of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly working together to fine-tune and undertake concrete measures to attain these millennium goals. But the horrifying terrorist incidents of 11 September have diverted our attention to the agenda of immediate importance. However, as we, the Member States, mobilize our political will and resources to fight international terrorism, we must heed the advice of the Secretary-General in his statement to the General Assembly at the 44th meeting, on 10 November, when he said, "Let us remember that none of the issues that faced us on 10 September has become less urgent".

As important as our common effort against international terrorism is, we must not forget many other priorities that rightly deserve our equal attention and commitment for prompt action. The debate of the General Assembly on this item, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit", is thus timely and significant. Here we have to take stock of our accomplishments thus far and examine tangible ways to take our work forward with the road map. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in coming up with the document "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration", which provides useful information and thought-provoking suggestions on the strategies to reach these goals.

In our view, a significant portion of the Millennium Declaration and the suggested road map highlight the importance of achieving human security by attaining both freedom from want and freedom from fear. The message that human beings should be at the centre of all our efforts, whether in promoting peace and security or pursuing development, is one that pervades the Declaration and the road map.

The onus of attaining freedom from want is best reflected in the Millennium Summit's commitment to development and poverty eradication. That should be one of our highest priorities. Only by ensuring that the basic needs of people are met — by overcoming hunger, having access to safe water, having equal access to education and getting treatment for diseases ranging from malaria to HIV/AIDS — can individuals feel genuinely secure and live their lives to the fullest potential.

Poverty also breeds another serious threat to both human and national security, and that is the threat from narcotic drugs. This drug traffic is inextricably linked to multiple forms of transnational crimes, including money-laundering and international terrorism. Therefore, Thailand is determined to redouble its efforts to implement its commitments to counter the world drug problem, as called for in the Millennium Declaration.

We must work together to do away with poverty. At the global level it is our hope that in following up the World Trade Organization ministerial conference in Doha we will address poverty issues effectively and help defeat this scourge through, inter alia, enhanced market access for products from developing countries and increased capacity of developing countries to reap the benefits from trade. Likewise, we hope that the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, will spur further concrete initiatives to effectively tackle development needs and other freedom from want issues of the developing countries in a holistic manner.

We are all aware that much of the initiative must also be undertaken at the national level. To this end the Royal Thai Government has made poverty eradication one of its top policy priorities. The establishment of microcredit schemes for both rural and urban poor is but one concrete manifestation of this policy. To ensure that these policies bear fruit, we pursue them by applying strictly the principles of transparency and good governance, including anti-corruption measures.

Attaining freedom from fear by providing people with an environment of peace and security is the other key ingredient of human security, the ideas of which are embraced both in the Millennium Declaration and the road map. A culture of peace and tolerance needs to be more actively promoted to help prevent disagreement from escalating into conflict. This could involve developing effective conflict-prevention strategies and following up on various recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict.

Peacekeeping is an important arm of the United Nations in helping to maintain international peace and security. As a major troop-contributing country, particularly in South-East Asia, we hope that the United Nations will give priority to completing the peacekeeping reform process in line with the Brahimi report we endorsed at the Millennium Assembly last year. We also support follow-up work that would lead to more effective peace-building and rehabilitation and reconstruction strategies to ensure long-term stability in the post-conflict phase. It makes no sense for the United Nations to win a conflict by simply ending it, only to lose the peace thereafter. We hope that continued political support and the commitment of resources for rehabilitation and reconstruction in places such as East Timor and Afghanistan will be the trademark of United Nations policy in this regard.

Furthermore, Thailand fully subscribes to nuclear non-proliferation and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, especially weapons of mass destruction. In this connection we support the proposal to organize an international conference to identify ways to eliminate nuclear dangers. We also support the reform of sanctions regimes so that they become more targeted and effective while minimizing the negative impact on people and on third countries.

I have merely touched on some aspects of the many goals embraced in the Millennium Declaration. We believe that the road map deserves our consideration. The strategies therein could be fine-tuned in the course of our deliberations. However, at the end of the day, both the Declaration and the road map should not remain documents but should be implemented in their entirety. We the Member States should show our political will and mobilize the necessary resources to translate these commitments into concrete action, individually and collectively. For the United Nations to fulfil its task in meeting the challenges of the decades to come, it is incumbent upon us to give it the necessary resources and tools and, more importantly, the requisite support. Thailand for its part will work closely with the United Nations and the international community in our common effort towards the realization of the goals set forth in the Declaration.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): We applaud the initiative in introducing the draft resolution on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. We accord it our fullest support. It is our view that reporting on the Summit annually and reviewing it every five years will facilitate the achievement of our goals.

The advent of the new millennium has been accompanied by an interest in a resurgence of the fundamental values and principles that we share and cherish. These found fruition in a number of events at the beginning of the new century which focused global attention on the eradication of poverty and promoting sustainable trade and development. A major event undoubtedly was the convening of the Millennium Summit leading to the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which consists of specific commitments with the objective of improving the collective progress and welfare of humanity. The Declaration adopted some concrete measures in the priority areas of development and poverty eradication; protecting our common environment, the needy and the vulnerable; meeting the special needs of Africa; and strengthening the role and effectiveness of the United Nations. The new millennium has therefore ushered in, and rightly so, an era of rising expectations and promises.

We thank the Secretary-General for the praiseworthy road map report contained in document A/56/326. It attempts to delineate in detail how the commitments of the Millennium Declaration could be realized. The report is timely and provides a useful input towards the successful conclusion of the two major international events in 2002: the International Conference on Financing for Development, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

These conferences are important for us. They will, to a considerable extent, determine whether we can bequeath to future generations a sound environment whereby the three fundamental freedoms — that is, freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of sustainability — can be assured. They will also provide us yet another opportunity to undertake conscious attempts to bridge the gap between promise and performance. The Financing for Development conference assumes special significance in view of the observation by the Secretary-General in the report that

> "none of the millennium development goals can be reached unless significant additional resources are made available". (*A/56/326, para. 9*)

With a view to achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration, at least three major conferences have been held in the year 2001. That is

encouraging. The conferences are the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the special sessions of the General Assembly on the Habitat Conference, and HIV/AIDS. The core recommendations made at these events should be integrated components of any strategy to achieve the goals of the Millennium Declaration. Though not formally connected, the outcome of the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting in Doha should, hopefully, support our aims.

While we commend the report, we would like to make some observations on a number of areas of concern to us. Paragraph 82 of the report emphasizes the need to integrate the millennium development goals with national goals to narrow the gap between expectation and achievement. However it does not take adequate note of the fact that poverty reduction is already an overarching priority for many developing countries and that their domestic policies and strategies place the utmost emphasis on it. It also fails to mention that national plans and programmes can have only limited success as these countries face significant challenges in the implementation of the poverty reduction programmes due to lack of resources and supply constraints.

Paragraph 86 suggests strengthening capabilities to improve basic social services. However, for the least developing countries that often lack the requisite productive and institutional capacity because of resource constraints, initial support by the development partners may be necessary. In this context we feel that the crucial aspect of providing external financial and technical assistance should have been highlighted here.

Most of the social malaise identified in the Millennium Declaration exists in an acute form in the least developed countries. That is in the nature of the systemic and structural problems of the least developed countries. These problems must be addressed on a priority basis if a significant dent is to be made in worldwide poverty. In our considered view, this issue should have received special attention in the road map. If the road map is intended to be a primary plan of action, the special needs and concerns of the least developed countries should receive attention with a view to achieving the goal of poverty reduction. There should therefore be greater focus on the constraints on the least developed countries in future reports.

Peace, security and disarmament are vital aspects of ensuring freedom from fear. Bangladesh is constitutionally committed to basing its external relations on the maintenance of international peace and security, as enshrined in the principles of the United Nations Charter. As an elected member of the Security Council, Bangladesh is playing an active role in its various deliberations. As a major troop-contributing country, we have a deep interest in the reform of peacekeeping operations. In this context, we welcome the recommendations of the Brahimi report as a concrete contribution towards that end.

The Millennium Declaration has as one of its goals the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that peace and development are intertwined and interrelated. Therefore, in the field of disarmament, total elimination of nuclear weapons is a priority for us. Bangladesh is constitutionally committed to general and complete disarmament. In South Asia we stand out as a country which has manifested uncompromising and unwavering commitment to the international disarmament regime for all categories of weapons of mass destruction as well as for conventional weapons. We are also a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and have signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in reaffirmation of our total commitment to nuclear disarmament.

The millennium goal calling for concerted action against international terrorism has assumed special significance in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks. Bangladesh has always unequivocally stated that it is strongly opposed to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and that it stands firmly committed to all international efforts towards the elimination of terrorism through acceptable legal norms, at both national and international levels.

It is our belief that the eight millennium development goals, along with the specific targets, are achievable provided the political will and commitment generated through the convening of major conferences in the area of socio-economic development are sustained. The commitment will provide the basis for international support, cooperation and assistance in creating a conducive and supportive external environment. The will will buttress our sense of resolve. The challenges for the future are formidable but not insurmountable. Given our collective will and determination, I have absolutely no doubt that, just as

the kite rises against the wind, so shall we be able to better our performance even in the face of adversity.

Mr. Kerim (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): The solemn Declaration of our heads of State or Government, gathered here in New York in September of last year at the dawn of the new millennium, reaffirmed, inter alia, their determination to establish a just and lasting peace throughout the world, thus acting in full compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter considered to be timeless and universal. The fundamental values deemed to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century are freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility among the nations of the world.

One year on, world peace has been shaken by the consequences of the unspeakable terrorist assaults of 11 September, thus posing two paramount questions. Are we now, a year later, closer to realizing the vision of a better future for the world, enshrined in the Millennium Declaration, than we were a year ago? What will we all do to reaffirm the timeless and universal character of these fundamental values and principles?

Some of the commitments and goals set out in the Millennium Declaration, in the eyes of some now seem to carry more weight than others, or at least, are considered priority issues without the relevance and importance of the long-term goals and perspectives being questioned. The issue is how to preserve the fine balance among these priorities in the globalized and interdependent world of today without neglecting or marginalizing some of them, while coping with the problems that some parties consider to be their priority. To prevent that we have to act as a global community in all respects. That means confronting terrorism, international crime and money-laundering, and combating HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, building an equitable global trading system, promoting financial stability, preventing deep and sudden crises and safeguarding natural resources and the environment.

My delegation appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General in preparing the timely and comprehensive report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration", as requested under resolution 55/162. Indeed, most of the targets set out in the Millennium Declaration are derived from various international forums and global conferences from the 1990s and earlier. However, that does not diminish in any way the complexity of identifying and implementing the appropriate strategies for achieving these goals at different levels. As is rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, it is only the sustained political will of States that will enable us to carry out the commitments given by world leaders a year ago. Those more fortunate must be courageous in taking the larger share of responsibility for the betterment of all, and they must live up to their commitments, however unpleasant that may be in the short term. By the same token, those less fortunate must do everything in their power to ensure that the efforts of the former are not in vain but are beneficial to all.

The global fight against terrorism was elevated to the top of the international agenda by the horrific scenes of human loss and destruction of familiar, valuable landmarks. The prompt reaction by the General Assembly and Security Council to the terrorist attacks on 11 September and the setting up of the Security Council Committee to oversee the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), are further proof of the indispensable role of the United Nations in the global fight against international terrorism. In this regard, my delegation endorses the strategies to combat international terrorism at the global level indicated in the road map. We are hopeful that the legislative work done in the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210, in elaborating drafts of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and a convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, will bear fruit. We are also hopeful that the Ad Hoc Committee will succeed in reaching agreement on the draft conventions as soon as possible.

In our view, the international response to the global threat of terrorism has to be measured. There must be not only effective justice vis-à-vis all those who committed, perpetrated or supported these heinous acts, but also manifold action to alter the environment that was conducive to such destructiveness and depravity.

Particular attention should be attached to strengthening the international rule of law, and in particular supporting States in designing domestic legal frameworks consistent with international human rights, norms and standards; universal adherence to all major multilateral non-proliferation regimes and strengthening of the implementation and verification mechanisms of the

Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention; effective countering of the world drug problem and illicit drug trafficking, fighting transnational crime, including the trafficking and smuggling of human beings, and in particular money-laundering, as reliable sources for financing international terrorism; and concerted action to end the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons by supporting regional disarmament measures and cooperation, that is, by providing technical assistance and financial support to the countries affected in the fragile regions of the world, one of them being South-Eastern Europe.

For reasons that are more than obvious the fight against terrorism is a predominant issue throughout the proceedings of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. However, the millennium development goals must remain high on the agenda of the international community. Broadening understanding among civilizations, addressing regional issues and problems — many of them related to development — and seeking comprehensive and effective remedies are essential on a global scale. If it succeeds in outgrowing the divisions and stereotypes of the past, which are not suited to the present age of globalization and interdependence, the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey next year could mark a turning point in addressing the issues related to mobilizing resources for financing development. Reducing poverty and promoting development are essential to achieving sustained and broad-based economic growth. Cutting the number of people living in extreme poverty in half by 2015 and alleviating hunger requires strong international assistance in creating and enabling political, social and economic environments. We are hopeful that the forthcoming review conference of the World Food Summit will succeed in identifying new strategies at international, national and regional levels to reach the goals set. The fact that almost 1 billion people in the developing world still lack access to clean water supplies and the fact that 2.4 billion people still lack basic sanitation point to the urgency of also addressing these issues.

Of no less importance is the achievement of the other developmental goals addressed by the Millennium Declaration, at the heart of which are the economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the international covenants and relevant conventions. We hope that the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg next year to review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit in Rio, will be successful in accelerating the process. Let me point to one specific issue that is particularly pressing for my country: the development and implementation of strategies to reduce youth unemployment, which has now reached more than 40 per cent of the world's total unemployment. We welcome the recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network, formed at the initiative of the Secretary-General in collaboration with the International Labour Organization and the World Bank, and based on a new political commitment and approach given at the Millennium Summit. Young people are an asset, not a problem, in building a better world for today and tomorrow.

The United Nations, above all, must find the strength to reaffirm faith among nations and people concerning fundamental human rights, human dignity and equality for all. All human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural — are universal and interdependent, and any violation of human rights is an attack on human dignity. That is the only effective path towards strengthening the relevance of our Organization at the dawn of the new millennium. Following that path we will face enormous challenges. We must rise to those challenges for the sake of making a better world for the 6 billion people on the planet and the 2 billion more who will join us in the next 30 years. Only a well-coordinated strategy, based on greater policy coherence and close cooperation among the international institutions and agencies within the United Nations system, supportive interaction between the United Nations system and its partners at the national level, including non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector, can lay the foundation for confirming the commitment to the noble goals of the Millennium Declaration. Not only will that make the United Nations a more effective system but it will also create a more suitable environment for the follow-up process to the outcome of the Millennium Summit to become the driving force of the United Nations itself.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to convey its thanks to the Secretary-General for the detailed report that he has presented to us, in which he proposes a road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The objectives laid down and the strategies proposed have earned the support of my country as necessary and adequate instruments to ensure a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The

Millennium Summit made it possible to identify issues that affect all of us, and that we must confront as part of a challenge that no State can avoid. It lays down an agenda for peace, development and hope for a world beset by absolute poverty, intolerance, illicit drug and arms trafficking, terrorism, transnational crime, corruption, the proliferation of arms, discrimination, the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, deterioration of the environment and unbalanced development, among other things.

The heads of State and Government reaffirmed their decision to establish a just and lasting peace throughout the world by the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law and the principles of justice and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Tolerance, equality, solidarity, freedom, respect for nature and mutual responsibility were recognized as fundamental values essential for international relations in the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately, today we are meeting in the shadow of the terrorist acts of 11 September. More than ever before, we have a common objective that unites and identifies us: confronting international terrorism in an effort that transcends frontiers, ideologies and religions, races and cultures. The terrorist attacks have changed our perception of the world and call for the consolidation of a global alliance against that scourge, which should be headed by the United Nations. This makes even more urgent the prompt implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Overcoming terrorism calls for stepping up the struggle against related phenomena such as drug trafficking and money-laundering. As Colombia has said in countless international meetings, we must control the production and consumption of illegal drugs without forgetting that this is a complex, transnational business whose profits circulate throughout the international financial system and finance terrorism. Laxity in the control of financial institutions and the existence of tax havens and bank havens make it easier for international criminal organizations to finance violence and terrorism. We must also eliminate the uncontrolled trading in and production of chemical precursors and intensify the struggle against transnational crime, including the trafficking in and smuggling of human beings.

As the President of Colombia stated during the general debate,

> "None of the priorities identified [at the Millennium Summit] was stressed as much as the need to ensure that globalization benefits all peoples of the world. ... We need, through deep reflection, to become aware of our responsibility for humanizing globalization and ensuring that it reflects the interests of all countries and regions." (*A/56/PV.45*)

It is therefore necessary to create, as a strategy for developing the Millennium Declaration with the aim of eradicating absolute poverty, a multilateral, open, equitable, predictable and non-discriminatory trading and financial system, a new framework for world partnership that would ensure sustained economic growth and sustainable development for the least advanced countries. For this to be viable we must eliminate all trade barriers and obstacles facing the developing countries and mobilize the necessary resources to finance their development.

In this context, the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held next year in Mexico, assumes particular importance. There can be no doubt that unless we mobilize the necessary financial resources and make progress towards a new structure that would ensure the stability of the international financial system, the commitments and course laid down at the Millennium Summit will remain dead letters. From the same standpoint, we must promote the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held next year in Johannesburg, where a shipping charter will be adopted that will make it possible to achieve genuine balance between the pillars of economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

Another priority of the road map towards implementation of the objectives laid down at the Millennium Summit is the protection of civil society in armed conflict — in particular, women, children and humanitarian workers. There must also be an increase in international cooperation for the prevention of conflict, a greater capacity for helping countries to consolidate and restore peace. To enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace we must give it the necessary tools and resources for conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction.

My delegation shares the views of the Secretary-General with regard to the importance of putting an end to the culture of impunity by bringing to trial the perpetrators of serious crimes. Here we would

highlight the historic importance of the creation of the International Criminal Court and reaffirm our support for measures to promote its rapid establishment and effective functioning. Another great challenge is that of HIV/AIDS. We believe it is essential to undertake intensive global action to fight this disease. We also need an extra injection of resources for programmes to reduce its impact.

At the Millennium Summit world leaders reaffirmed their responsibility for and commitment to a new course for the international community in the twenty-first century aimed at two essential objectives: peace and development. We must work wisely to design and implement concrete, effective and efficient measures to meet the commitments laid down in the Millennium Declaration. Colombia supports any initiative that will make these goals achievable. We must consolidate a new United Nations that can meet these challenges. The precise objectives and strategies of action, which are included in the Secretary-General's report, constitute an important advance towards that goal. We trust that we will be equal to this challenge.

I should like to conclude by saying that the road map must be translated into effective action that helps to consolidate the principles of justice and equality. The active participation of all States in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration will ensure a better future for mankind, a future in which all human beings will be free from fear, hatred, poverty and war.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I should like to express my appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on implementing the Millennium Declaration. The report will certainly help us focus on the major issues we face. The tragic events of 11 September have understandably been at the centre of our attention. Yet, as the Secretary-General reminded us a few days ago,

> "none of the issues that faced us on 10 September has become less urgent. ... The agenda for peace, development, and human rights set for us in the Millennium Declaration is no less pressing." (*A/56/PV.44*)

In fact the major themes of the Millennium report were echoed throughout last week's general debate, when many delegations recalled that the fight against terrorism was inseparable from the challenge outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

The road map prepared by the Secretary-General is a useful tool for addressing those challenges. On the one hand, it offers an overview of how the world community and the United Nations are putting into practice the goals set at the highest level a year ago. It enables us, collectively and as individual countries, to identify those areas where progress is being achieved and where further efforts are most required. On the other hand, it outlines a creative vision of the role of the United Nations in the years ahead and presents strategies for actions relating to each of the commitments in a clear and precise way.

The report covers a vast amount of material ranging from maintaining international peace and security to development and poverty eradication, thus enhancing our awareness of the generally global nature of the challenges and priorities we face. We welcome the fact that it identifies yardsticks to be used in evaluating the implementation of the eight fundamental development goals set out at the Millennium Summit. Clear and stable numerical targets on matters ranging from infant mortality rates to environmental sustainability can help trigger action and measure its effectiveness. Another positive aspect of the report is that it is truly integrated and comprehensive. It draws on the work and expertise of Governments, the entire United Nations system, international organizations and civil society. It reflects an understanding of the importance of the coordinated strategies that allow us to tackle many intertwined problems simultaneously across a wide front.

As the report recalls, many of the goals set in the Millennium Declaration have been with us for years. They are well known. We must take to heart the admonition that

> "What is needed ... is not more technical or feasibility studies. Rather, States need to demonstrate the political will to carry out commitments already given and to implement strategies already worked out". (*A/56/326, para. 7*)

That will require hard decisions by all countries, both individually and collectively, yet these millennium goals reflect above all our global partnership to foster growth and allow for poverty eradication. We therefore welcome the proposal to include indicators on such relevant components as official development assistance, market access, debt and sustainable

development. That will help us test our progress on the road to global solidarity.

We agree with the Secretary-General that to be effective the assessment must be continuous. We therefore endorse his proposal to follow up the road map with yearly reports supported by strategic five-year evaluations on the long-term implementation of the millennium goals. We support the setting of priorities for the first three-year period and believe all will agree that the most urgent tasks are in the fields he has rightly identified: the prevention of armed conflict; the treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria; strategies for development and for sustainable development; bridging the digital divide; and curbing transnational crime. These choices of priority areas are especially appropriate as we prepare for the global conferences scheduled for next year dealing with the issues of sustainable development, financing for development and children.

My delegation welcomes especially the convening by the Secretary-General of the High-Level Panel of the Youth Employment Network, which has proposed a set of concrete recommendations to give young people across the world better opportunities to find decent and productive work.

Brazil endorses the vision set out in the millennium report of a global partnership of all stakeholders, bringing together governments, civil society and the private sector to consider innovative measures to fight poverty and disease above all. The road map we are considering goes a long way towards helping us to gauge our progress in bridging the gap between the United Nations and the growing demands of "We, the peoples" of the world for greater international cooperation and solidarity.

Mr. D'Alotto (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): In his recent statement in the Assembly, the President of the Argentine Republic, Mr. Fernando de la Rúa, said that the road map for implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, prepared by the Secretary-General, was a reliable programme for confronting the grave circumstances of the time, and he added that irrationality and violence by a minority could be isolated and defeated by nations cooperating on the basis of the general principles which the heads of State had endorsed in the Millennium Declaration and in regard to which concrete steps are being proposed today.

I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm and develop these concepts in the conviction that we are facing a road map that lays down the basic outlines of peace, human rights and development called for by the international community and requiring, we understand, urgent execution. Henceforth it is a matter of political will, as the Secretary-General states in his report, and it is particularly incumbent upon States to comply with their commitments and make progress in applying the strategies formulated. We are aware that in many cases it is a matter of difficult decisions which affect or can affect certain interests or that make it necessary to modify certain practices in politics or economics. But we consider that the path indicated envisages in a balanced way the needs of the majority, particularly those of the developing countries; everyone, especially those who have the most, has to give something in order to recover a universal environment of harmony, security and justice.

There can be no doubt, and Governments made this clear in the recent general debate in the Assembly, that the defence of human security constitutes the priority of our time. The criminal terrorist attacks of 11 September made obvious this need, which we had already foreshadowed in the Millennium Declaration with regard to this perverse phenomenon, which totally disregards the fate of the civilian population in any country. Terrorism must be combated by concerted measures to be decided upon by the Security Council, in particular within a juridical framework which has already been broadly developed through various instruments that have to be ratified by all States if we want to see decisive progress in this area. The Secretary-General exhorts us to make progress in producing an anti-terrorist convention of a general nature. It is our task to overcome our differences intelligently in order to conclude that instrument as soon as possible and promote its universal ratification.

Peacekeeping operations remain a vital instrument for stability and security. Developing countries have played a decisive part in them and are among their principal contributors. The breadth and complexity of the new peacekeeping operations require more human and financial resources, and it is necessary to continue making progress in the process of reform, which has begun, so that these operations can continue to lend their valuable support.

The common effort of States should be focused on making progress in disarmament. Progress has been

achieved in the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the recent talks between the United States and Russia give grounds for a certain optimism with regard to the future, but we still need new action to promote the universality of the relevant treaties and also to give new impetus to the process of eliminating nuclear weapons. Another disarmament issue, which is equally important and has been stressed by the Secretary-General, is that relating to the universalization of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, as well as intensifying the work of the United Nations in mine clearance. That is an area in which our country can give technical and humanitarian cooperation.

Security depends also on the application of law and international treaties in force. These are fundamental for maintaining international security and coexistence. Only an increase in respect for, and the acceptance of, international law by States can promote the strengthening of peace and the stability we all long for in order to tackle the tasks of development. The United Nations has already produced the necessary juridical instruments and must see that they are implemented. Recently there has been a qualitative leap forward in measures designed to combat the impunity of those who violate international humanitarian norms and human rights. The creation of the International Criminal Court and the setting up of other international courts to bring to trial those responsible for crimes against humanity, against peace or genocide, all this is notable progress which, when fully operating, will have an important deterrent effect on those who are tempted to abuse their power. Therefore, as soon as possible, we must achieve the 60 ratifications necessary for the Statute of Rome to enter into force, so that the tribunal that has been created can begin its work as early as possible.

The Secretary-General clearly expresses in his report that there is a fundamental interdependence between human security and sustainable development. There can be no global peace without decisive progress in eradicating poverty and in promoting sustained economic growth. Problems of hunger, malnutrition and disease require coordinated solutions, but the financial commitment of the most developed countries is indispensable in carrying out the strategies decided upon, among others, to reduce the spread of AIDS, malaria, and other transmissible diseases. The Global AIDS and Health Fund is a fundamental tool for achieving this objective and we hope that it can be put into effect as soon as possible. We also need the contribution and cooperation of developed countries with respect to official development assistance, trade and the elimination of measures that interfere with market access for the products of developing countries, in particular agricultural produce. Such is the way to ensure equity in international trade relations. The result of the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Doha indicates the beginning of a favourable disposition in this area by the rich countries, which should be reflected in future rounds of commercial negotiations. Developing countries have the responsibility of promoting appropriate national policies, consolidating their institutions, promoting democratic participation and ensuring transparency in administrative management.

These questions and others, such as paying attention to the special needs of Africa because of the marginalization it has suffered from in the course of global economic competition, has been properly recognized in the Secretary-General's road map. We support its orientation, which reflects the claims that have been made by the majority of the international community for so many years now. The United Nations has tackled decisively the question of poverty and development, and the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, should constitute a fundamental step forward in defining the themes that deal with the imperative needs of the developing world.

As the Secretary-General points out, the protection of the environment for present and future generations is another major sphere of action for the Organization. We believe that the measures advocated by the road map appropriately identify the priorities which will undoubtedly be considered in the process of preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development next year in Johannesburg.

We attach fundamental value to the strengthening of democratic practices and respect for human rights. It is of major interest that the Secretary-General should have placed special emphasis on the need to encourage States to promote periodic and pluralist elections to guarantee the greatest freedom of expression. The protection of the rights of women, displaced persons and refugees, indigenous populations and migrant workers are included in the report, which stresses the need, so often expressed by the United Nations, to ensure compliance with prevailing international norms.

The road map concludes with proposals for the strengthening of the United Nations. A few days ago, the Secretary-General stated that the United Nations was the "indispensable common house of the entire human family". It is indeed from here that we will have to decide the steps that will bring us closer to the objectives that we set out at the beginning of the new millennium. For this our tools must be more effective. Even though the General Assembly has embarked on its process of revitalization, it has to be stepped up, eliminating superfluous questions, simplifying its programme and increasing the efficiency of its debates. For its part, the Security Council's working methods should be reformed. Its transparency should be guaranteed, the principle of the sovereign equality of States should be upheld and questions related to its expansion and the equitable geographical representation of all regions without creating any new privileges should be debated within the framework of the Assembly. We support a broad-ranging debate on these ideas, which are dealt with in the Secretary-General's report.

The Secretary-General has presented to us a guide of a general nature. It does not describe in detail the policies that each State will apply in the future. Nor should it be understood as an exhaustive list of formulations. Complex local and regional realities often call for very different solutions, but the proposal presented to us is closely linked to the principles that we endorsed just a year ago in terms of peace, human rights, protection of the environment, eradication of poverty and sustainable development. The concrete steps suggested to us can be discussed in further depth, but it is indispensable to tackle them from the standpoint of international cooperation, giving up confrontation and recrimination, and to take the opportunity, provided by the general road map for the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration that has been presented to us today, to achieve general understanding on how to solve the central questions of our time in order to achieve the peace and security so longed for by everyone.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): We have before us a document that is of particular importance, which covers almost all areas of activity of the United Nations and is structured according to the basic goals defined by the leaders of the world in the new century. It is oriented towards the future and action, and sets forth a true vision. It contains a number of recommendations for a strategy of action for the international community. The Secretary-General has set out for the international community's action concrete stages in each priority area, while highlighting the interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of these areas. The scope of the report and the short period of time that the General Assembly can dedicate to its study means, of course, that we can focus on only some of the issues that it contains. I will, therefore, convey our principal observations on the report, following the headings of the chapters of the Millennium Declaration itself.

In the area of peace and international security, of course, the issue of international terrorism is not new. The Millennium Declaration speaks of it and establishes goals in this area. The Secretary-General expands in his report on elements of that strategy in order to implement the declared objectives and proposes specific measures in order to complete the international legal framework to combat terrorism in accordance with the Declaration. However, the terrorist attacks on 11 September against the United States unfortunately have shown the dangerous scope of international terrorism, which, by using various pretexts and ploys as cover, seeks to sow confrontation and destabilize the world. Tunisia had already sounded the alarm about the real dangers of this scourge at the beginning of the 1990s. Today I would like to reiterate the need for a truly global strategy to combat this scourge, including taking preventive steps against the underlying reasons and potential sources of violence and extremism. It is urgent for the international community to take concerted action. It is a collective responsibility and each one should be ready to contribute to it.

Maintaining peace and international security requires resolute action by all nations and protagonists on other fronts. The consolidation of the rule of law is very important at the national level, but also at the international level. It is also crucial to prevent armed conflict. We all recognize the need for a strategy of prevention aimed at the underlying sources of those conflicts. We fully support the strategy proposed by the Secretary-General on this topic.

We think that disarmament is a key area where determined action must be taken to eliminate the arsenals of weapons, especially weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons continue to be a serious threat to humankind, despite the end of the cold war.

The Millennium Declaration has established the following goal:

> "to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers". (*resolution 55/2, para. 9*)

We consider that every effort should be made to make that goal a reality.

In the area of development and poverty eradication, we note that the density of the relevant chapter in the report of the Secretary-General reflects the importance that world leaders place on these issues. We fully subscribe to the strategy proposed by the Secretary-General that the international community clear the way towards the substantial implementation of these goals, which are at the very heart of the concerns of the United Nations — whether they be general policies to be followed or recommendations dealing with specific sectors such as combating hunger, access to drinking water, combating AIDS, improving housing and so on. As for the question of financing for development, we think that it is urgent to increase both the contribution of private capital and also official development assistance (ODA). On this point we think it is vital for industrialized countries to commit themselves to effectively achieve the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). That kind of commitment is needed now more than ever.

As the Secretary-General mentions in paragraph 135 of his report, official development assistance decreased by $10 billion in the period 1994-1999, whereas it should have increased considerably. That is a paradox because, as the Secretary-General noted quite aptly, that period saw a string of major United Nations conferences which put forward a clear programmatic basis for development cooperation, an increasing number of developing countries undertook major economic and political reforms and the fiscal situation in donor countries also improved significantly during that period.

As a topic closely related to the topic of poverty eradication, I should like to recall Tunisia's initiative in establishing a global solidarity fund to combat poverty at the international level. Far from being a duplication of already existing mechanisms, this fund seeks to be a useful complement to them by promoting small projects that generate jobs in the poorest regions of the world. It would be funded by voluntary contributions to an account managed by the United Nations Development Programme. It would be a flexible and innovative tool.

We think the fund would enhance the capacity of the international community to quickly provide operational solutions to the most urgent needs of the poorest countries. If such a fund were to be set up it would contribute to providing a more tangible illustration of the principle of solidarity solemnly proclaimed by our leaders in the Millennium Declaration, in addition to the other fundamental values they underlined as essential in international relations in the course of this new century. The Tunisian proposal is very much along the lines of the spirit of the Millennium Declaration.

Another topic is the protection of the most vulnerable groups. The Secretary-General devotes an important chapter to this topic and offers us various recommendations. I should like specifically to focus on the issue of protection of civilians during armed conflicts. On this point we must recall the serious deterioration in the situation of Palestinian civilians in occupied territories due to the policies and practices of Israel, which are contrary to international law and international humanitarian law, in particular the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. It is urgent that the international community gives the necessary attention to the establishment of effective international protection for Palestinian civilians and does everything to make sure that Israel respects international law and international humanitarian law.

Aware of the specific difficulties that the African continent has encountered, the leaders of the world set aside a chapter on Africa in the Millennium Declaration. In fact, they expressed determination to take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced official development assistance, increased flow of foreign direct investment, and transfer of technology. The strategy proposed by the Secretary-General to reach these goals merits the active support of all Member States and the international and regional institutions and organizations involved. Aspects of this strategy to implement the other goals of the Millennium

Declaration are also worthy of our closest attention. In sum, Africa today more than ever needs the support and solidarity of the international community.

Before concluding, I should like to express our support for the proposal in the final chapter of the Secretary-General's report, specifically in paragraph 306, pertaining to the topics that are to be developed in the annual reports that he will submit to the General Assembly in the years 2002, 2003 and 2004. They are, first, preventing armed conflict and the treatment and prevention of diseases, including AIDS and malaria; secondly, financing for development and strategies for sustainable development; and thirdly, bridging the digital divide and curbing transnational crime. These will then be followed by another, comprehensive report in 2005. My delegation is ready to take an active part in the discussion in the Assembly on this item and on the draft resolution that has been submitted to us.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like, first, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, to express our gratitude and congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his very detailed report, the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. We finally have a document that we really needed, because it gives us a vision of the future and enables the international community to glimpse where we are going and shows us a way. In this brief declaration I will not dwell on all the various aspects of the document, which is very rich, but will focus mainly on the issues which are of the greatest importance to the Moroccan delegation and which will probably dominate in the upcoming years, and that is the central topic of strengthening the United Nations by reforming it.

It is true that our leaders made their commitment to enter the new millennium by establishing new boundaries for humankind based on how well we perform in justice and how compassionate we are in solidarity. That is the key to the success of any efforts to give concrete expression to the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration. It is also true that when faced with the multiple and dangerous problems that the world's population is encountering, it is the duty of all of us who represent our countries to strengthen the Organization's capacity for action in order to build a world that is established on the principles of the global security of mankind. Indeed, in the new millennium the United Nations must serve as an arena for more concrete steps aimed at the well-being and prosperity of humankind as a whole.

The implementation of these goals requires, without a doubt, renewing and modernizing the universal institution. Without a doubt, sooner or later we will have to reform the Charter of the United Nations by updating some of its provisions that have become obsolete, while at the same time preserving those principles that have universal value and scope. Likewise, we will need to make progress in discussions on how to restructure the Security Council so that that body adequately reflects the new world geopolitical order in the best conditions of impartiality, effectiveness, representativeness and legitimacy, which will be incontestable.

It is unfortunate that since 1993, and as a result of a lack of political determination, very little progress has been made in the examination of the issue of the size and makeup of the Security Council. The urgency of reform is now obvious, a just and equitable reform of this important body. The reform requires a strategy with a specific timetable, on the basis of which the Working Group set up for that purpose would be able, we expect, to complete the mandate entrusted to it. The reform should take into account the deep changes that have occurred in the international arena for the past 50 — soon to be 60 — years, while making sure that the Council remains an effective body, because it watches over and acts as necessary to maintain peace and international security.

That does not mean that the work of the Working Group I mentioned is hopeless. Not at all. To the extent that this is a truly necessary reform it will take place, sooner or later. It is important that the powerful of this world also conclude that.

Furthermore, the work of the General Assembly should be given a renewed dynamism and should be simplified and oriented towards concrete action. The central role of the Assembly as the principal representative organ of the United Nations is to develop international cooperation in the political area, to encourage the progressive development of international law and its codification and to promote international cooperation in economic, social and other vital areas. Hence we cannot accept that the General Assembly should be seen simply as a passive body, in which dialogue does not lead to any concrete action. That would seriously undermine the credibility of the

Assembly and of the United Nations as a whole. That is why our efforts should concentrate on an in-depth study of General Assembly reform so as to substantially improve its functioning by rationalizing it. I believe the process of rationalization has begun, but we need to continue it.

The President returned to the Chair.

From the point of view of economic development and the international community's efforts in this area, we will without a doubt have to rethink the structure and operation of the Economic and Social Council. Certainly in the corridors everyone seems to be convinced of that. We will need to discuss it by appropriate procedures.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen international law, we share the comments of the Secretary-General with respect to the recent disturbing increase in international judicial bodies, which carries the risk of fragmenting international law. In order to avoid that risk the International Court of Justice should be seen, as has been said, as a focal point to allow us to maintain unity in the interpretation and application of international law. We should not lose sight of the fact that the International Court is the main judicial body of the United Nations, and it ordinarily should intervene when statutes of other international jurisdictions are put in doubt in order to give a direct judicial interpretation of the Charter. We believe this interpretation should come within the competence of the Court, which is the main judicial body of the United Nations.

It is clear that we need to build a synergy among all the various bodies of the United Nations. We must make sure that there is an effective partnership between the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, the private sector — this partnership has already started — and civil society. We support all the efforts of the Secretary-General towards involving the private sector in financing all activities aimed at improving the lot of the most disadvantaged people in the world. All members of the United Nations family should work together closely in order to make the United Nations the forum for the indispensable bringing together of mankind and allowing us to express our common aspirations for peace, cooperation and development.

Finally, the current globalization automatically requires the globalization of the playing rules. As those rules are globalized, we will need to take the global interests into account in the United Nations. That can only be done here, in this forum in which we find ourselves, whether we are talking about protection of the environment, financing for development, or eliminating terrorism, just as examples.

With this in mind the tragic events of 11 September unfortunately have come to remind us that the strengthening of the United Nations and adapting its structures is absolutely indispensable. The task is a noble one, and the Moroccan Government is ready to make a positive contribution to it in order to build a better future for new generations in this new millennium.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): One year ago the leaders of the world gathered here in New York to write the history of the future, to reclaim the future for individuals, the people of the world, to whom our work belongs. Like the group that gathered in San Francisco 55 years earlier to establish this United Nations, our leaders united around a vision of peace, freedom and prosperity rooted in timeless values common to all humanity. More specifically, they agreed on a set of goals and objectives towards which all nations and individuals would strive, and delineated the role of the United Nations in coordinating our response to the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

While barely a year has passed since the Millennium Declaration was adopted, it is proper for us to revisit the commitments that we made, assess our progress in implementing measures to eliminate poverty, disease, environmental degradation and armed conflict — made all the more urgent by recent tragic developments — and recommit ourselves to the imperatives of our time.

In the past year the world's attention has been drawn to the daunting challenges facing the African continent. At the Millennium Summit, and again at the HIV/AIDS conference, the international community undertook to make special provisions for the unique situation facing the African people. The development of the African continent and our assistance in providing Africa with the necessary tools to address the manifold social, economic, and political problems that it is facing will be a major challenge for the international community in the years ahead. In this connection, Israel has been following with great interest the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which began last year at the Millennium Summit as the millennium programme for Africa. This courageous new economic and social

programme calls for greater international cooperation to assist Africa's development in the midst of a crucial period for the continent.

Israel, for its part, has a long record of cooperative work throughout Africa and is continuing this tradition of friendship and solidarity by offering its experience and expertise to help NEPAD succeed and the African continent to recover. We remain committed to cooperating with Africa, to providing humanitarian aid when needed and to working in close partnership with the relevant international actors and specialized agencies to ensure the success of this ambitious new programme. If we are to succeed in promoting sustainable development both in Africa and around the world, we must not neglect the more fundamental threats to peace and security, to our environment and to public health.

This past summer the nations of the world committed themselves to stopping the deadly spread of HIV/AIDS, a humanitarian catastrophe of immense proportions. The magnitude of the threat and the tremendous human cost which it entails require us to act decisively. Israel supports the Secretary-General's call to action and is fully committed to engaging in the global fight against AIDS. Israel's development of a comprehensive educational programme and its work on producing a compact mobile unit to provide services in hard-to-reach areas are but two ways in which we can assist other nations suffering from the burden of this terrible disease.

In addressing the issue of development worldwide, but especially in Africa, we cannot afford to ignore the centrality of education to the broadening of economic opportunities and the acceleration of development. The key to development in the modern age is integration with the global economy and worldwide information networks. But that can occur only when education is widely available and accessible to all. In this regard, the Millennium Declaration drew our attention to the problem of the digital divide and to the fact that many countries cannot provide their people with the basic tools to succeed in the information age. In Israel we have developed a programme to enable youth from underprivileged backgrounds and underdeveloped towns to learn the valuable computer skills that will enable them to succeed in the global village. We presented this programme to the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and explained the way in which volunteers use the Internet to communicate with participants, exposing them to equipment and technologies they had never before experienced. That programme can serve as a model for other developing countries to enhance computer and technological skills and help their young people succeed.

The challenges facing the developing countries — in particular the least developed countries, countries with economies in transition, landlocked countries and small island developing island countries — are truly daunting. Not long ago, Israel was itself a developing nation, dependent almost exclusively on agricultural exports for foreign exchange. In the course of our transformation to a technology-based economy, we have acquired tremendous experience and know-how. Over the years we have shared that experience with many nations through, the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Centre for International Cooperation (MASHAV). Since its inception, MASHAV has trained 175,000 individuals from more than 140 countries and in six languages. MASHAV's activities focus on areas in which Israel has a certain advantage or has developed a particular expertise, such as irrigation, desert agriculture, food security, water management, early childhood education, community development, emergency and disaster medicine, refugee absorption and others. Israel values its tradition of international cooperation and assistance and is committed to continuing this work, together with local actors, focusing on human capacity-building, the empowerment of women and the diffusion of modern technologies.

When our leaders gathered to address the threats to peace and security of the new millennium, the world had not yet been stunningly reminded, as we were on 11 September, of the global menace of terrorism. Member States moved quickly to condemn the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., and the Security Council adopted unprecedented measures to stop the flow of funds and other assistance to terrorist organizations. As part of our commitment to the new millennium, we must scrupulously abide by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and reject any and all attempts to justify the murders of innocent civilians, regardless of cause or grievance. Indeed, the Millennium Declaration speaks about freedom from fear, and there can be no greater fear than the fear that gripped our host city on 11 September and continues to oppress millions of innocent civilians around the world: the fear of being suddenly and indiscriminately

a target of deadly aggression. Terror has the potential to single-handedly disrupt all the noble and worthwhile objectives that we have committed ourselves to achieving in the new millennium. Just as buildings that took years to build were brought to the ground within an hour, so too can the efforts of thousands, undertaken over generations, be violently undone by a single act of terrorism. We cannot allow the threat of terror to deny the promise of tomorrow to the millions of people throughout the world who look to this body for hope and leadership.

The dawn of the new millennium has ushered in a period of unprecedented possibility as well as tremendous challenges. The United Nations has the potential and the obligation to undertake the necessary reforms that will enable it to serve as the primary international forum where these challenges can be addressed and the full potential of our ever-changing world can be realized. Israel is committed to working with other nations as well as United Nations bodies, in a spirit of friendship and cooperation, to formulate a collective response to the challenges of the new millennium and to ensure that the coming century is one of freedom, development and opportunity for all the peoples of the world.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): It was only a year ago that the leaders of the world community celebrated the turn of the new millennium with an extraordinary Summit here in this Assembly. It was a moment in history celebrated with zeal, as a path was laid for greater cooperation in our collective vision for a more prosperous future.

My delegation fully endorsed the framework for the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit presented last year in resolution 55/162 by the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri, and we endorse also the Secretary-General's report in document A/56/326, "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration". The report reminds us all of the celebrated goals set and commitments made last year and catalogues the strategies for moving forward.

Consistent with the ideal of meeting our commitments, Nauru has been working with the Pacific Islands Forum, and our development partners to develop a regional strategy to enable us to better respond, collectively and individually, through measures that are practical and acceptable to our communities. In support of regional peace-building efforts, the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, in consultation with member countries, has begun to address key areas identified in the Forum's Biketawa Declaration, adopted in Kiribati last year. Nauru has offered to participate in a regional observer mission of eminent persons drawn from Forum member countries, to help monitor the forthcoming elections in Solomon Islands.

In terms of disarmament, Nauru has ratified several important conventions, including the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We signed more than 15 treaties and protocols last week during the treaty-signing ceremony, and also ratified, within 12 months of signing it, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Governance continues to be the main area of concern for my country and our region in general, and, in consultation with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, we are taking the necessary steps to implement the Honiara Declaration on law enforcement and the Aitutaki Declaration on governance and accountability. We recognize that governance remains an integral part of our development assistance programmes and national development plans, and we are now increasingly looking at ways to improve and strengthen our law enforcement mechanisms to make them more effective. We are also encouraged by the increasing participation of non-governmental organizations and the private sector in governance issues.

My country recognizes implicitly that health and education are fundamental building blocks for society. In May this year, Education Ministers met in New Zealand and adopted the Forum Basic Education Action Plan. Nauru, along with other Pacific leaders, agreed to work further on the provision of resources for basic education, the development of partnerships with non-governmental organizations and the incorporation of gender and governance issues in basic education. The ongoing challenge is to source and allocate adequate budgetary resources to ensure basic education at an early age for our children.

Nauru supports the Secretary-General's proposed themes for next year — preventing armed conflict, and the treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria. These diseases are becoming more prevalent in our region, and we take them seriously. In collaboration with specialized United Nations agencies, much work has been undertaken to

increase awareness of AIDS among communities in our region that face sensitive cultural barriers. We are putting into place measures to address problems related to HIV/AIDS, dengue fever, tuberculosis and malaria. These include improving health standards, expanding the availability of treatment and specialized training throughout the region.

Nauru endorses the Millennium Declaration's strong emphasis on integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes. One of the more important goals of the Declaration for us was the commitment called for in chapter III to address the special needs of small island developing States by implementing rapidly and in full the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly. The Barbados Programme of Action identified a number of priority areas in which specific actions are needed at the national, regional and international levels. In conjunction with the regional strategy developed in the Pacific through the Forum and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, we continue to advocate a stronger global response to global problems such as climate change and loss of biodiversity. Nauru has also been supportive of the work of various regional agencies, particularly the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, in the development of an environmental vulnerability index, which we hope will be taken up and further developed by the Climate Data Programme and the Economic and Social Council.

Turning to the United Nations itself, my delegation notes that reforms are at present ongoing to meet the goals of the Millennium Declaration concerning the administration of this great body. The goal of reaffirming the central position of the General Assembly as the chief policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations is warranted, and to play that role effectively we need to continue our efforts to revitalize and streamline our work. We also need to intensify our efforts to reform the Security Council. It needs to be enlarged and its working methods made more transparent to reflect new political realities and provide equal geographical representation for all regions of the world. Any reform also needs to enhance the Security Council's ability to anticipate, prevent and react to events on short notice.

Finally, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General's approach for a more comprehensive review and assessment to be undertaken by the Assembly in five years' time. We should draw from the review sessions that have already been held since Rio, as well as the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held next year.

With these brief comments, Nauru is pleased to support the draft resolution being proposed on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We compliment the Secretary-General on his "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration". Last year our leaders assembled here and adopted the historic Millennium Declaration, reaffirming their faith in the United Nations and its Charter as indispensable foundations for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The Millennium Declaration presented humanity with a new hope for a better world based on peace, justice and equity. We were looking forward to a new century of peace and tranquillity governed by eternal human values and civilized norms, unlike the last century, which was full of upheavals and great wars. We were hopeful. But the terrorist acts of 11 September gave us a wake-up call. The forces of darkness raised their ugly heads yet again to halt our millennium march just when we were about to embark upon it. But we should not be deterred. We must not let these devilish forces succeed. We must foil their evil designs. We must continue our journey together and unitedly fight the scourge of terrorism. In doing so, however, we must not overlook the legitimacy of peoples' struggles against foreign occupation and alien domination in exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination, a right that is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In his road map the Secretary-General has comprehensively dwelt upon the issues contained in the Millennium Declaration. We look at this road map as a normative guideline, which will be evaluated and reviewed by the United Nations membership on a regular basis, in terms of both its relevance and its implementation. The Secretary-General's emphasis on the importance of establishing global peace and security for achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration is noteworthy. His focus on replacing the culture of reaction with that of prevention and peacekeeping reflects a positive approach.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General that there is a need to address the underlying causes of conflicts if peace is to be maintained. We believe that unresolved political disputes, including those in Bosnia, Kosovo, Palestine, Kashmir and other places, have a destabilizing effect on world peace. The lack of progress in the resolution of these disputes has given rise to a sense of injustice, deprivation and hopelessness. The frustration of the oppressed people is understandable when disputes, such as those in Kashmir and Palestine in particular, despite being on the agenda of the United Nations for years, remain unresolved. Indeed, global peace and security will remain elusive if these conflicts, which have been sources of tension and devastation, are not addressed. Needless to say, if we do not wish the Millennium Declaration to become another piece of waste paper lying buried in the archives of the United Nations we will have to seek its implementation in all sincerity and in its entirety.

The rapidly changing international environment demands a fundamental appraisal of the United Nations capacity to deal with diverse and proliferating conflicts and crises in various parts of the world. The purpose of this review should be to equip the United Nations with the necessary means to reduce the possibility of the outbreak and recurrence of conflicts and violence through preventive measures, including dispute resolution, on which there is one full chapter, Chapter VI, in the Charter of the United Nations.

For its part, in fulfilment of its obligations under the Millennium Declaration, Pakistan has striven hard to defuse tensions in South Asia. Pakistan went to the Agra Summit last July in that spirit. President Pervez Musharraf has proposed the resumption of dialogue with India for the settlement of the Kashmir question in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people, so as to pave the way for normal relations between two estranged neighbours. We reiterate our readiness to address all outstanding issues with our neighbour in the larger interest of the peace and security of the region. Pakistan is also deeply conscious of the nuclear dimensions of the security environment of our region. President Pervez Musharraf, addressing the General Assembly last week, expressed Pakistan's readiness to discuss a South Asian security mechanism involving peaceful resolution of disputes, preservation of nuclear and conventional balance, confidence-building measures and the non-use of force prescribed by the United Nations Charter.

The people of Afghanistan have been suffering the ravages and devastation of conflict for more than two decades. It is time to heal their wounds, to alleviate their sufferings and to empower them to rebuild their society. They do not need to be abandoned once again. A stable and peaceful Afghanistan is in the vital interest of the region, and in particular of Pakistan. We fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, to build a broad-based, multi-ethnic, demographically representative Government in Afghanistan. In our view, any future political arrangement in Afghanistan must be home-grown and not imposed from outside, and must ensure the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. It is also our hope that the political process in Afghanistan will be simultaneously accompanied by a resettlement plan for the more than 3 million Afghan refugees now sheltered in Pakistan. Peace-building in post-conflict Afghanistan will require a gigantic effort by the international community through sustainable measures, as part of a three-pronged strategy — a military, political and humanitarian/rehabilitation/reconstruction strategy.

In the road map, the Secretary-General has elaborated on the issues of development and poverty and their impact on the socio-political life of societies. Indeed, peace and development are indivisible. We believe that poverty and deprivation provide the breeding grounds for extremist groups and organizations. The extremist survives and thrives in an environment where injustice and indignity prevail. We hope that the international community will give due attention to the underlying causes of extremism and terrorism and take concrete measures in responding to the Secretary-General's request to address the issues of poverty through substantive economic uplift, poverty alleviation and social action programmes in developing countries. A major step in this direction would be to reduce, if not eliminate, the debt burden of the poor and underdeveloped countries. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's observation that the developed countries should increase official development assistance (ODA) to 0.7 per cent of their gross national product, which is the prescribed target. Regrettably, the net ODA to developing nations declined from $58.5 billion in 1994 to $48.5 billion in 1999. That decline has come at a time when ODA should have actually gone up substantially. Obviously, our hopes of achieving the targets set out in the road map cannot be achieved given this lack of commitment.

We also look forward to the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development, in Mexico next year, as a unique opportunity to evolve a new development paradigm in the form of new patterns of cooperation and partnership involving a comprehensive strategy for domestic resource mobilization, increased private capital flows and official development assistance, the removal of trade barriers against developing countries, rationalization of the unstable debt burden and, finally, the systemic issues. Economic imbalances will have to be removed in order to attain a just, equitable and harmonious world order, and the developing world will have to be given a role in managing the phenomenon of the globalization of the world's economy.

Turning to another issue, the President of Pakistan, in this house last week, invited the attention of the world community towards the tragedy of the third world, where rulers, together with their minions, plunder countries' wealth and are afforded easy access and safe havens to stash the loot in the first world. If restrictions have been imposed on the laundering of drug money and money held by terrorists, why can similar restrictions not be imposed on the laundering of this kind of loot? We hope that the Secretary-General will evolve a mechanism to address this problem. We particularly urge the developed countries to legislate against deposits of ill-gotten money, to assist in investigations against the looters and to ensure the early return of the plundered wealth to its countries of origin.

The road map spelled out by the Secretary-General also rightly focuses on human rights, democracy and good governance. Over the past two years the Government of Pakistan has remained actively engaged in improving governance, through political restructuring and introducing genuine democracy in the country. A sound democratic structure of elected local governments has been established on the basis of adult franchise, which has been in place since August this year. Another revolutionary step has been the allocation of one third of the seats to women in these elected bodies. The ongoing process of democratization will culminate in the elections to the provincial and national assemblies and the Senate by October 2002, in accordance with the road map announced last August, which the President said he was determined to implement.

We fully share the views of the Secretary-General on making concerted efforts to meet the special needs of Africa. We also appreciate the efforts being made by the Organization of African Unity — what is now known as the African Union — in this regard. Pakistan fully supports the endeavours of the world community towards promoting peace, economic development and tackling the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases in the continent. We hope that the world community will assist the African countries by enhancing official development assistance, increasing investments, debt relief and private market access for their products and services.

Pakistan feels proud to be in the service of its African brothers by contributing its troops for peacekeeping operations in conflict situations on the African continent. Similarly, we support the need for special attention to small island developing States, the least developed countries and landlocked countries.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations is a uniquely global institution with universal membership. We reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. The global community must make common cause for making the United Nations system more democratic and responsive to the collective interests of its Members.

We also support the demand of the overwhelming majority of the world community that the Security Council be reformed on the principle of the sovereign equality of States, without expanding the existing oligarchy or creating new islands of privilege. We feel that the enlargement of the Security Council must reflect the increase in the general membership of the United Nations, making it a more democratic, representative, transparent, accountable and effective body. There is also a need to enhance the Council's ability to anticipate, prevent and react to events at short notice.

Peacekeeping operations of the United Nations constitute an important element of United Nations activities in the maintenance and preservation of peace and security. Pakistan is one of the oldest, largest and most consistent contributors to these peacekeeping operations. Our commitment to and involvement in the United Nations peacekeeping operations is based on a fundamental belief in international peace, collective security, preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building.

We believe that the goals of peacekeeping should not merely be to separate the warring factions but to

identify the root causes and help in a resolution of the conflicts. Peacekeeping operations must have a clear direction, a precise mandate and an effective command-and-control structure, as well as clearly defined uniform rules of engagement. The United Nations must ensure that a conflict has been resolved before it disengages itself. These are some of the challenges confronting United Nations peace efforts, of which peacekeeping is an essential element.

We believe that the millennium development goals identified in the road map, if implemented in all earnest, could usher in an era of peace, progress and prosperity for our planet. We need only to redouble our efforts in the direction of realizing these objectives. We owe it to future generations. This will be our contribution to posterity.

In conclusion, I quote what the President of Pakistan said in his speech in this forum last week at the 45th meeting:

> "Let justice prevail; let no people be wronged; let sufferings be eliminated; let discontent be addressed; let humanity rise as one nation to eliminate subjugation of the weak; and let there be peace."

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I should like to welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, in which world leaders unanimously acknowledge the collective responsibility of the international community to achieve the goals of the twenty-first century.

The report of the Secretary-General outlines measures to strengthen the role of the United Nations in promoting human security, achieving sustainable development, exercising human rights and protecting our common environment. We highly appreciate the Secretary-General's action plan, designed to meet the commitments made by the heads of State and Government. We also support the draft resolution prepared by the President of the General Assembly, which gives an additional input for further progress in implementing the goals before us. My delegation highly appreciates the intention of the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive progress report every five years, starting from 2005. These reports, reviewing the implementation of decisions taken at United Nations conferences, will enable the international community to fully implement the Millennium Declaration.

In his report, the Secretary-General expresses his concern that the turn of the millennium has brought new challenges in the field of peace and security. The maintenance of international peace and security remains the top priority of the United Nations in a new era. We believe that without peace and stability there is no chance to foster dialogue between States for peaceful solutions. Without peace and stability, socio-economic development is impossible. We cannot resolve global problems by using force, terrorism and racial discrimination. Wars and conflicts are not among key elements for creating a new, better world, free from violence.

The recent terrorist acts called for a coordinated response against terrorism from the international community. Taking into consideration developments in the world characterized by the growing threat of this phenomenon, my delegation expects the working group to finalize the draft of the comprehensive convention against international terrorism during the year 2001.

Kazakhstan expresses its full support for the activities of the international anti-terrorist coalition to eliminate the terrorist network in Afghanistan and bring a long-awaited peace to its suffering people. My Government also supports the intention of the coalition to vigorously prosecute the war against the terrorists and remaining Taliban hold-outs. Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1377 (2001) are the international community's best instruments against terrorism and will be fully implemented by my country.

My delegation concurs with the view expressed by other delegations that it is highly important to consolidate the success of the recent military operation of the coalition by moving forward the process of the comprehensive settlement of the situation in Afghanistan under United Nations leadership. Kazakhstan is ready to participate actively in any mediation or peacekeeping mission that would help to establish peace in Afghanistan and bring stability and security to our region.

The Millennium Declaration identified the six key areas requiring the collective commitment of the international community. We support the strategies of the road map prepared by the Secretary-General. My Government is committed to a peaceful, stable and environmentally safe world, and supports all the objectives of the Millennium Summit.

We stand for the strengthening of the central role of the United Nations in its efforts to ensure global

stability and to build equitable relations between States and peoples based on mutual respect and universal values. Kazakhstan particularly welcomes the commitment made by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration to promote the survival and development of children, gender equality and the empowerment of women. My Government will continue to implement the decisions of the Millennium Summit, strengthening cooperation with the United Nations system in key areas of peace and security and social and economic development.

Mr. Sadi (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): A little more than a year ago, in this very place, the Millennium Summit concluded with the adoption of an important Declaration. It was probably the biggest gathering of leaders from throughout the world ever organized. The Millennium Declaration committed the heads of State and Government, as well as other high dignitaries from throughout the world, to spare no effort in finding solutions in the course of this century to the expectations, hopes and legitimate aspirations of millions of human beings throughout the world — aspirations to peace, cooperation and development. To that end very ambitious priority goals were set. By its resolution 55/162, on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to draft a report proposing detailed strategies to put into practice the Millennium Declaration and to achieve its aims. The reports of the Secretary-General that we have before us, which, respectively, contain the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network, formulate detailed strategies and concrete actions that we should give the attention and focus that they deserve. I should like to congratulate the Secretary-General on the excellent reports, and the imagination, realism and relevance of the strategies and specific actions that he has proposed. It is now up to the Member States of the United Nations, which is to say the international community as a whole, to make sure that the commitments will be lived up to and translated into concrete steps. In short we must translate words into deeds.

It is quite encouraging to see that the major international conferences that took place in the inter-sessional period have already produced results in respect of the goals of the millennium. The Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which took place in Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001, adopted a political Declaration, a Programme of Action for the decade and seven commitments, taking into account the particular needs of the least developed countries. These include duty- and quota-free access to northern countries for exports from the least developed countries because of the important role of trade in development, debt alleviation and the mobilization of external financial resources for those countries. However, it remains to set up a mechanism for effective implementation of and follow-up to the recommendations, and we call for this to be done.

The General Assembly devoted its twenty-fifth special session, which took place from 4 to 8 June this year, to the examination and assessment of progress accomplished in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. That session led to the adoption of a Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, reaffirming the commitment to provide decent housing for everyone, which corresponds to the millennium goal of achieving by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers, as proposed in the "Cities without Slums" initiative. With that in mind, supplying drinking water and cleaning up slums should be considered measures leading in the right direction. However, any strategy recommended should aim at the complete elimination of slums and shanty towns.

It is undeniable that, despite the drop in the number of armed conflicts, international peace and security continue to be seriously threatened. The terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September provided a clear and tragic illustration, and they call for the international community as a whole to become aware of how we must deal with issues of peace, security and disarmament. Now more than ever before, the United Nations will have to play a key role in ensuring the primacy of law in international affairs, particularly in examining the links between peace and development, and in combating impunity, international terrorism, transnational crime, drugs and other problems. It is appropriate to reaffirm the key role that the International Court of Justice will have to play in the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Cameroon regards that as a very important concern, and that is why we urge Member States to submit their disputes to the International Court of Justice and to implement its decisions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Likewise, it would be a good idea to take advantage of all the opportunities provided by international conferences to relaunch and intensify the campaign for the signature and ratification of a broad range of legal instruments that are at the very foundation of international legality. We should also step up our efforts in the current context in order to promote the rapid entry into force and effective implementation of a number of international conventions that pertain to terrorism and disarmament.

Cameroon, which is already a party to most of the multilateral international conventions on combating terrorism and on disarmament, is actively engaged in signing or acceding to conventions to which it is not yet a party. Specifically on the topic of disarmament, it is obvious that in the light of recent events the strict application of all the conventions in this field is urgently imperative. Furthermore, we must reaffirm the need for a constant and more decisive engagement of the United Nations and the international community in the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. With this in mind, we should welcome the fact that in the past few years the Organization has garnered considerable experience in this area, leading to the recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Secretary-General. However, to further strengthen United Nations capacities in the area of peacekeeping we must provide sufficient human, financial and material resources. On this point the Brahimi report contains some good proposals for reform that are currently being implemented. This reform process, which we fully support, must continue.

We also support the idea that strengthening African capacities in the area of prevention, management and the solution of conflicts would not mean stripping the Security Council of its main responsibility for maintaining peace and security throughout the world, including Africa, nor would it lead to the disengagement of the international community from maintaining peace in Africa.

The twenty-sixth special session of General Assembly, on HIV/AIDS, from 25 to 27 June 2001 was a milestone in the implementation of the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration, because of the negative impact that this pandemic has on the development of the economies of poor countries. The Declaration of Commitment adopted at that special session contains specific goals and is a decisive step in the right direction to combat the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. This is the place to launch an appeal to the international community and to the major pharmaceutical corporations throughout the world so that medication against HIV/AIDS, particularly anti-retroviral drugs, will become more widely accessible at affordable prices.

As for the special needs of Africa, the high-level debate at the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council was devoted to the role of the United Nations system in assisting African countries to attain sustainable development. At the end of that debate the Council adopted an historic ministerial declaration by which member States of the United Nations bodies, and international commercial and financial institutions, pledged to take special measures in favour of Africa in order to achieve for that continent the goal established by the Millennium Summit, and that is, to take up the challenges: the elimination of poverty, attaining sustainable development, debt cancellation, improved access to markets, increased official development assistance, increased foreign direct investment flows and the transfer of technology. We hope that the efforts of the Economic and Social Council to follow up the Millennium Summit's recommendations concerning Africa will be better taken into account in the next report of the Secretary-General with respect to the road map, specifically with a view to encouraging Governments and international institutions to live up to their commitments.

The ministerial declaration of the Economic and Social Council integrates the strategic priorities of the New African Initiative adopted by the heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at the summit held in Lusaka in July 2001. We urge the international community to provide firm and concrete support for this initiative, which in a very short time has become the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

I am happy to say that with the help of the agencies of the United Nations system, Cameroon is one of the first States to have developed a progress report on the implementation of millennium goals. This report describes the results already achieved and those that are expected on the socio-economic and environmental levels and will henceforth serve as a point of reference to guide the final implementation of the strategy document for the reduction of poverty. My delegation welcomes the fact that starting from next year the Secretary-General will submit an annual report

which will take stock of progress achieved in the implementation of the commitments undertaken in the Millennium Declaration up to the year 2005, when all of the millennium goals will be evaluated.

To conclude, I should like to express the hope that neither the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration nor the recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network will remain a dead letter. We hope that the political commitments of our leaders will be translated into reality in line with the hopes that have been raised.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, on behalf of my delegation, I will make a very brief statement, since most previous speakers have emphasized the concepts of the obligations which demonstrate the great importance of this subject for the international agenda in future decades. Permit me also to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for the document that we are discussing today, the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, because it gives us very clear-cut guidance that makes it possible for us to meet the challenge of the twenty-first century at a good pace and with a firm course.

The meeting of heads of State and Government last year was an historic milestone of great importance. The United Nations succeeded in bringing together a great number of world leaders in order to bring concerted action to the agenda of the twenty-first century, principally with regard to subjects connected with peace and economic and social development as essential prerequisites for the future.

The results of that summit are embodied in the Declaration, which spells out common fundamental values for international relations among States: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and common responsibility for managing economic and social development and for confronting threats to international peace and security. But at the same time, it includes the new commitments to make the work of the United Nations even more effective for the peoples of our planet, particularly the poorest of them.

My delegation wishes to endorse the commitment assumed by the Government of the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías, to achieve the objectives and goals laid down at the Millennium Summit. However, we know that the effort cannot be individually directed by nations but must be a collective effort by the Organization to which we are representatives. My delegation believes that the General Assembly has great responsibility for following up the themes of the Millennium Declaration. We believe the Organization possesses the necessary structure to perform this task.

I would add that my country from the very first moment, proposed that use be made of this session so that the heads of State of the four round tables that met during the Millennium Summit — which we had the honour to share, along with the heads of Government of Singapore, Poland and Algeria — would meet and make evaluations, together with the heads of State and Government of other countries so that presidential diplomacy could follow up commitments and support the work of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly. The events of 11 September prevented us doing it at that time. I should like to stress once again the importance of presidential diplomacy and its contribution to the work of the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

We will see to it that all members of the Assembly receive the document specially prepared by the Mission of Venezuela containing the statement, translated into the official languages, that my country made on that occasion.

We must make concrete commitments, such as reducing poverty by half by the year 2015. We must reduce infant mortality, fight the AIDS epidemic, improve the human rights situation and promote democracy and good governance in a climate of total liberty. We believe that we need to make a greater effort to find formulas to facilitate the participation of the individual in the economic and social development of our peoples.

The Monterrey summit is of great significance because it will be an opportunity to bring about a more balanced and more equitable world with regard to the means of obtaining financing for development, and at the same time to bring about a fair distribution of wealth and enjoyment of happiness for the peoples, particularly for those who have least. Renewing the North-South dialogue is a challenge, as is promoting South-South cooperation by overcoming the gap between the countries that are Members of the United Nations. Another gap — the digital gap — must be one of the major targets of the work to follow up the

Millennium Summit. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, in South Africa, is another opportunity to evaluate the implementation of Agenda 21, to honour the commitments made in Rio a decade ago and to reaffirm the urgency of following that path today.

I should also like to take up some of the proposals made at that time. Apart from the Security Council, there is a need for a development council that would meet the challenge of reducing poverty indicators and improve living standards in the poorest and least advanced countries. We must democratize the Security Council and eliminate the right of veto, which is based on a situation that prevailed in the year 1945, and we must find a way to bring it up to date. We must institutionalize, strengthen and energize regional groups in the United Nations so that they can make recommendations with regard to the grave problems confronting us.

For all these reasons I should like to state that my delegation requests that the draft resolution presented by the President of the General Assembly on this subject be adopted by acclamation as testimony of our faith in a more humane and just world, and that we be inspired by the new needs of the United Nations.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 58th plenary meeting, on 19 November 2001, I now call on the observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The tragic events of last September and those that have followed seem to have profoundly changed the way we understand the issues that are being debated today at the international level. Today more than ever we understand that poverty, conflicts, the swift deterioration of natural resources, the denial of human rights and the poor management of public affairs are interactive and interdependent. The major problems with which we will have to deal are all closely linked. That is why it is so important to have a global approach and a coherent strategy that allows us to deal simultaneously with multiple problems. That is precisely the main goal of the road map presented by the Secretary-General.

The road map follows the main guidelines of the Millennium Declaration and specifically proposes concrete guidelines to help States, the United Nations system and the international community as a whole to move from words to deeds. The road map is very action-oriented. It also has a transversal approach that highlights the interdependence and interactiveness among the various areas of activity. As the Secretary-General himself has underlined, conflicts and pandemics often strike regions where inhabitants are poor and illiterate. It is increasingly clear that without equitable development there can be no sustainable peace throughout the world. Likewise, if no reliable security can be established, all efforts for development will lead to nought. This vicious circle, unfortunately, has often contributed to worsening the situation despite the best of intentions. The road map can help us get out of this trap.

First, we need to make the many strategies proposed, operational. But we also must avoid scattering our efforts in every possible area of activity; that would run the risk of our actions cancelling each other out because of a lack of consistency and coordination. However, this effort should be facilitated if we all focus on achieving the goals set out at the Millennium Summit. These goals correspond to the main concerns of the international community in the areas of peacekeeping, poverty eradication, environmental protection, the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy. If all pursue these goals, it will help us to focus our efforts. But first and foremost we need to prove that we have the firm political will needed to live up to our commitments. That will should be applied not only to the achievement of the goals by all partners but also to ensuring that our actions converge. We need to considerably improve the way we coordinate actions between ministries, Governments and institutions. In other words, we must improve our working methods. Switzerland has attached particular importance to this since the 1992 Earth Summit, both in its own administration and in its policy of international cooperation. We know that considerable efforts are still necessary and that innovative approaches are often difficult to apply, but we also know that considerable progress has been made, and that has encouraged us.

We particularly acknowledge the fact that in the past few years the United Nations has often paved the way and has worked hard to improve and strengthen itself. However, much remains to be done to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his road map, which we support. We have no doubt that the United Nations will achieve this with the help of everybody. The Organization has unique

advantages and features to serve as a catalyst of change, and it should continue to play this role in a world that is ever more complex and interactive. In this regard, it is very important for the Organization to ensure that its various bodies work better together. It should also strengthen its partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other multilateral organizations.

We should also get all the protagonists involved — national and international, public and private, each in its area of competence and influence — to pool their efforts so as to achieve the millennium goals. They should all contribute to a coherent, effective and efficient approach, avoiding waste and unnecessary losses, and reducing transaction costs. It is essential to have the full support of all relevant partners in order to implement the road map, including civil society and the private sector. In this context, we think that it would be particularly useful to build public-private partnerships that could serve the common interest effectively.

To conclude, one last comment about follow-up. The reports that the Secretary-General plans to submit will provide an opportunity to identify and analyse the progress achieved, the obstacles met and the lessons to be drawn. They should also highlight instances of lack of coordination and coherence between and within institutions. This process should gradually allow us to refine the road map. Finally, a real effort should be made in the area of indicators, which must become more relevant and consistent with respect to the main methodological tools adopted at the international level.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Statement on the occasion of the twelfth Africa Industrialization Day

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to remind the General Assembly that tomorrow, 20 November, is Africa Industrialization Day. Since there is no plenary meeting tomorrow, I shall now read my statement for that occasion.

Since 1990 we have observed this Day in order to mobilize the commitment and resources of the international community in support of the industrialization of Africa. I think it is very appropriate that the challenges of Africa's industrialization for the new millennium has been chosen as the theme of this year's observance. The new millennium is being shaped by the rapid process of globalization, driven by information and communication technologies. Globalization provides us with both opportunities for economic development and, at the same time, challenges which include, inter alia, the marginalization of developing countries. In particular, many African countries are among the most vulnerable to such marginalization due to lack of capacity and resources, persistent poverty, rampant HIV/AIDS and chronic conflicts.

Africa therefore offers some of the most pressing and difficult challenges to the international community. At the Millennium Summit last year, world leaders resolved to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa. As President of the General Assembly, I likewise accord high priority to issues of special concern to Africa.

Industrialization is a necessary stage along the path of development. In the era of globalization and liberalization, diversifying economies and enhancing competitiveness are generally recognized as essential steps to promote sustained economic growth. The competitiveness of African enterprises depends heavily on their technological innovation, absorption and management capability. Access to developed markets is also a prerequisite for sustainable development in Africa. In this regard, donors and developed countries are urged to provide adequate resources and technical assistance to African countries, as well as beneficial treatment for African products, in order to enhance the industrial capacity and market access of African producers.

At the same time, the concepts of ownership and partnership should be seen as integral to national development and industrialization. African and other developing countries need to forge partnerships that will enable them to attract needed capital, technology and expertise from both within and beyond their borders. That in turn requires creating investor-friendly business environments to stimulate macroeconomic growth, expand markets, develop human capital and enhance technological capacity. In this regard, I wish to commend the historic initiative of African leaders in proclaiming the New Partnership for Africa's Development. I believe that the New Partnership for Africa's Development frankly addresses the stark realities of African development and holds out great promise of success. Its great strength lies in its

comprehensive approach, encompassing peace, security, good governance and economic development issues, all of which are central to successful industrialization. Thus, it deserves the full support of the international community.

I sincerely hope that the United Nations system, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which has a mandate to promote sustainable industrial development, among others, will continue to work more closely to mobilize resources and expertise in support of the African-led endeavours. On this Africa Industrialization Day I invite all Members to join the ongoing efforts to assist African countries to adapt their industrial policies to changing global conditions and to create a supportive environment for sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.60

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

60th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 21 November 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 38

Assistance in mine action

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/448 and Add.1 and 2)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before turning to the list of speakers, I should like to inform delegates that in a letter dated 22 October, addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States for the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the Observer of Switzerland in the debate on agenda item 38. In view of the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly accept that request.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

We will now proceed to the debate. The first speaker on my list is the representative of Belgium, who will speak on behalf of the countries of the European Union.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as Iceland and Liechtenstein as European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, associate themselves with this statement.

The events of recent weeks have shown us again that anti-personnel mines are a major humanitarian problem. The situation in Afghanistan — one of the countries most affected by unexploded mines and ordnance — is a sad illustration of this fact. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, between March 1998 and December 2000 at least 2,812 people were the victims of unexploded mines or devices. Last year, a quarter of the victims were people on the move, either because they were fleeing conflict or drought or because they were nomads. Beyond the catastrophic human effects, these devices have equally immense social and economic consequences for post-conflict development and the restoration of normal social conditions. The presence of mines is very often an obstacle to the distribution of humanitarian aid, since in many cases it means that detours have to be made to reach the population.

Regrettably, these observations hold for many regions of the world. That is why the European Union considers mines a fundamental problem and has made them one of its priorities. The European Union believes that mine action is the best response to this scourge,

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since it deals with the problem on a global scale. The five components of such action are complementary and deal with different aspects of the issue. Education and making people aware of the danger of mines are the fundamental stages. It is supremely important to ensure that, as far as possible, civilians living near mined areas do not join the already long list of victims. Assistance to the victims is also a major pillar of mine action. Aid to these people and their reintegration into society are fundamental aspects. Mine clearance is also essential and must be carried out as a matter of priority in places that are likely to affect the civilian population. It is also essential to ensure that areas cleared of mines are not mined again. That is why it is important to promote both international legal instruments on anti-personnel mines and the destruction of stockpiled landmines — which is the fifth component of mine action.

To ensure optimum allocation of resources, the European Union considers that the action being conducted must be kept under constant review. We have to ensure that we are doing enough. We believe that it is vital to see if any suitable improvements can be made. We also stress the need for effective coordination at the national level in order to draw up national action plans; plan the supply of services; facilitate the formulation of policies; remedy or avert any shortcomings in the services provided; ensure the fair allocation of such services; facilitate the sharing of information; reinforce national capacities; ensure that the beneficiaries of the activities are involved in them and are able to take control of them; coordinate research; and, finally, ensure coordination of the activities of all parties concerned, both inside and outside the country.

European Union support for mine action is expressed in particular by the draft resolution that it submits each year to the General Assembly under the agenda item being discussed today. Through its member States and the European Commission, the European Union is the leading provider of funds to mine action. In 2000 its total contributions totalled 125 million euros, and the Union alone provides more than 50 per cent of the total contributions to the Trust Fund. The European Union has also adopted two regulations aimed at strengthening its campaign against mines, and it will also continue to provide assistance to scientific initiatives and research aimed at devising more effective mine-clearance techniques.

The European Union is determined to continue its joint efforts to achieve the total elimination of anti-personnel mines throughout the world. It encourages all States actively to participate in the intersessional mechanism in Geneva relating to the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines. We welcome the ever-growing number of States parties to that Convention — 122 to date. The Third Meeting of States Parties, held in Managua last September, represented an opportunity to affirm once again the commitment of all States parties to eradicating, as quickly as possible, these cruel and cowardly weapons.

The Secretary-General's report on assistance in mine action is, for the European Union, a confirmation of the remarkable progress that has been made in the area of mine action, and especially as regards optimized strategic planning, operational support, coordination and information management. As regards planning, the mine-action strategy developed by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for the period 2001-2005 is very important for the transparency and further elaboration of the United Nations policy on mines.

The European Union supports the development — as provided for in the strategy — of emergency-reaction plans in order to promote rapid intervention in emergency situations in the context of both humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. This is in line with the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. Another important operational development is the continuing improvement in the monitoring of the quality of mine operations, and in particular the revision of the International Mine Action Standards, in cooperation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The European Union welcomes the fact that these very useful demining standards have been revised and that they will be supplemented by others, including standards for awareness-raising programmes and for the destruction of stocks. This ongoing process will eventually lead to a full range of standards dealing with all aspects of mine action. The European Union is convinced that the use of these standards will result in an appreciable reduction in the number of victims of anti-personnel mines, especially women and children.

The European Union welcomes the recommendation of the Panel on Peace Operations that UNMAS should become a division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and that two additional

posts should be created. This is but a just recognition of UNMAS's coordinating role in the area of mine action.

The true value of these contributions and these untiring efforts is referred to in the draft resolution on assistance in mine action submitted by the European Union. We hope that the draft will receive the widest possible support and that it will be adopted, as in previous years, by consensus.

I should like to conclude by paying tribute once again to all of those who are involved, closely or from afar, in this daily struggle against the scourge of mines, be it be through the United Nations, Governments, international organizations or non-governmental organizations. They all deserve our strong support in their efforts to help relieve the suffering of the victims and to ensure that this inhuman weapon does not cause any more of them.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): For the past decade we have been discussing the consequences of the indiscriminate use of landmines, which continue to haunt the civilian population in various parts of the world. It is alarming to note that over 60 developing countries — including Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Burundi, Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina — are suffering because of the irresponsible use of landmines as a result of foreign occupation or internal conflicts. The civilian population has been the main victim of landmines and unexploded ordnance, which has caused serious social and economic problems.

Today in Afghanistan alone there are over 10 million landmines scattered all over the country, which is perhaps the largest mine-strewn area in the world. Most landmine victims are civilians. We are particularly concerned because of the casualties resulting from the landmines. The victims are treated at hospitals in Pakistan, which are already burdened due to the presence of over 3 million Afghan refugees in our country.

My delegation has taken careful note of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Assistance in mine action", as contained in document A/56/448 and its addenda 1 and 2. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for chalking out a five-year strategy, beginning in 2001, for the United Nations Mine Action Programme. We have taken due note of this strategy, which focuses on obtaining comprehensive information regarding mine-infested areas and proposes emergency response and assistance to national and local authorities. It is also important that the United Nations has given due emphasis to coordination and to resource mobilization as a part of its strategy.

We have also taken note of the United Nations document entitled "Portfolio of Mine-related Projects". This document provides an overview of individual country programmes and the involvement of various United Nations agencies in mine action activities. However, we have noted with concern the large gap that lies between the enormity of the task of clearing mines and unexploded ordnance in various countries, especially Afghanistan, and the scarcity of resources available for the realization of those tasks. We are particularly concerned about the situation in Afghanistan, where millions of Afghan refugees are reluctant to repatriate while the threat of mines and unexploded ordnance exists. The primarily agrarian economy of Afghanistan cannot be rehabilitated until contaminated land is cleared. Similarly, casualties as a result of landmines place an enormous strain on the already overburdened hospital system, and vital emergency and assistance aid is hindered by the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance.

Pakistan, for its part, has actively contributed to demining operations in several affected countries. Our participation in demining operations in Kuwait, Cambodia, Angola, Bosnia and Western Sahara reflects our commitment.

Pakistan declared a moratorium on the export of landmines in 1997. We have also ratified Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and have submitted information pursuant to article 11(2) and article 13(4) of Amended Protocol II. We remain ready to consider further measures and initiatives in the relevant multilateral forums to address the problems arising out of the indiscriminate use of landmines.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, I would like to convey my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on assistance in mine action, which highlights key developments as well as significant achievements and challenges faced by the international community. Such an informative report will surely help us in shaping our future activities.

Although significant achievements have been recorded in the field of assistance in mine action since

1993, innocent people are still being either injured or killed today by landmines and other unexploded ordnance scattered on the surface or buried in the soil of several countries around the world. Much more remains to be done in response to the challenges before us. In dealing with this issue, my delegation would like to emphasize some issues that, in our view, are of particular concern. As we all know full well, the number of countries that require and request assistance in mine action programmes continues to increase, while the availability of resources is limited. The unpredictable flow of resources poses a challenge to effectively realizing these programmes. Therefore, every effort should be made to intensify international cooperation, promote coordination between all partners and provide adequate resources in order to ensure the full implementation of the policy and strategy for mine action.

While recognizing that the primary responsibility lies with national Governments, more complementary international support is required in countries where the scale of mine- and unexploded-ordnance contamination is widespread and severe. In that regard, my delegation fully supports the Secretary-General's observations contained in paragraph 105 of his report on assistance in mine action, issued under the symbol A/56/448. The report stresses the need to obtain adequate resources in response to the increasing needs, while calling upon the United Nations system to provide assistance in areas affected by mines and unexploded ordnance and urging the international community to redouble its effort to support the implementation of the United Nations strategy.

No other country in the history of warfare has withstood the kind of aerial bombardment that our country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, underwent between 1964 and 1973, during the Indochina war. The legacy, largely unknown to the international community, was the dropping of over 3 million tonnes of explosive ordnance on our small country. As a consequence, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is today still seriously affected by millions of leftover unexploded ordnance scattered throughout the country. In fact, unexploded ordnance contamination directly causes fear, injury, death and stunted socio-economic development. Indeed, it constitutes one of the root causes of poverty in our country.

Although the war ended more than 25 years ago, remaining unexploded ordnance indiscriminately maims and kills innocent people upon detonation. Since the end of the war, about 12,000 accidents related to unexploded ordnance have been recorded, including 6,000 deaths. Today, accidents involving unexploded ordnance occur somewhere in the country every two days. Most alarming of all is the fact that children account for more than one third of all casualties.

In order to address this problem, in 1996 our Government drew up a comprehensive programme whose objective is to reduce the number of civilian casualties from unexploded ordnance and to increase the amount of land available for food production and other development activities. A trust fund for the clearance of unexploded ordnance has been established, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the objective of which is to channel earmarked and non-earmarked contributions to the programme, which focuses on four components: community awareness; training and capacity-building; surveying; and clearance.

It is important to note that significant successes have been achieved in our efforts to nationalize the programme. More than 1,125 Lao staff are now performing their duties without the assistance of foreign experts. A national standard operating procedure has also been developed and the cost-effectiveness of operations has been improved. In addition, last year about 743 hectares of land were cleared and 80,000 items of unexploded ordnance were destroyed. Nearly 200,000 people have been briefed on the dangers of unexploded ordnance. As a result, the number of accidents has been reduced.

We hope to achieve further positive results in the years to come. Let me, on behalf of the Lao Government, express my sincere thanks to the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, as well as to UNDP, UNICEF and the European Union, for the technical and financial support they have extended to us in our endeavours to overcome this problem. It is our fervent hope that the Lao unexploded ordnance programme will continue to receive necessary financial support from our donors, both bilateral and

multilateral, in order to enable it to accomplish the task assigned to it.

Landmines and unexploded ordnance continue to be an issue of profound humanitarian concern for the international community. From this perspective, let us work hard together to address this problem, thereby giving those living under the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance a chance to enjoy a peaceful and productive existence. It is our belief that, through concerted global effort and with the United Nations as a focal point, we can guarantee the most effective response to the tasks assigned to us.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Anti-personnel landmines are weapons of terror that affect innocent civilians. They represent a threat to economic and social development. They threaten the recovery of war-torn communities.

The mine-ban Convention of 1997 was adopted for the purpose of helping resolve this humanitarian crisis. Since its inception, we have witnessed a dramatic decrease in the production of and trade in anti-personnel mines, as well as steady progress in their destruction and clearing. There are fewer new mine victims, and the level of funding for mine action is still increasing. The Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention took place in Managua in September this year. Although overshadowed by the tragic events of 11 September, it was a positive meeting, reflecting the progress made, particularly in the host country and surrounding region.

These developments are encouraging, but they are not enough. Landmines still represent a threat to millions of people; they continue to cause tremendous human suffering; they are a significant obstacle to economic and social progress. In short, they continue to constitute a humanitarian crisis.

The universalization of the Convention continues to be high on our agenda. In total, 122 States have ratified the mine-ban Convention. There are still many States, however, that have not signed or ratified it. Landmines are allegedly being used in 23 current conflicts, and they are being deployed even as we gather here. The fact that 15 Governments and 30 rebel groups are using these weapons is, quite simply, unacceptable. One State party may even be violating the provisions of the Convention. This is highly disturbing.

Unlike many other international processes, the Ottawa process has managed to achieve a strong partnership between Governments and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community. NGOs are indispensable partners for the implementation of mine-action programmes. They serve an important monitoring role. Their professionalism and tireless efforts have been indispensable and will be imperative for our common endeavours. We are grateful for and dependent on the continued cooperative relationship with the NGOs, in particular the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In the implementation of the Convention, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining is playing an increasingly important role. Without its support, the international work programme could hardly have been carried out. At the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention in Managua, it was agreed that an implementation support unit should be established as part of the Geneva Centre. Norway sees this as a positive next step in the implementation process.

The United Nations Mine Action Service will play a central role in the United Nations mine-action strategy for the next five years by promoting a strategic and coordinated collective response to the global landmine challenge. Norway looks forward to the continued United Nations focus on its role in improving the coordination of mine action within the United Nations system.

In the days ahead we will face several challenges in our work to free the world from mines. The future of funding is closely linked to the importance of the coordination of mine-action activities. Landmine Monitor Report 2001 reports that funding for mine action is generally increasing. This is positive, but we should be realistic. An equally high level of funding for the future cannot be taken for granted. We must therefore make sure that available resources are used in the best possible way. All relevant actors must support each other in this process. Mine-affected States must take ownership of mine-action activities. It is essential that mine action respond to local needs. Effective coordination at the national and local levels is key to ensuring the efficiency of our mine-action efforts.

The Norwegian pledge to allocate $120 million over a five-year period stands, but beyond that period,

we will also continue to be engaged in this issue, politically and financially. Together with other donors, we will seek arrangements to secure adequate funding.

We will continue to attach great importance to assistance to mine victims. We earmark specific Norwegian funds for such activities. Simultaneously, assistance to mine victims must be the responsibility of the mine-affected countries themselves. Physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, as well as the reintegration of landmine survivors, must be part of national health and social programmes. As part of our efforts to ensure national ownership of humanitarian mine action and victim assistance, Norway encourages the establishment of local support structures. One example is the initiative taken by the Landmine Survivors Network to establish survivors' advocates from mine-affected countries. Norway supports that initiative.

We must focus on implementation at the field level. A large amount of money is invested in technological research and development. There will still be a need for improvement and more efficient methods. However, research and development should be coordinated with the agencies in the field and focused on operational needs and conditions on the ground.

A great challenge to the Convention is compliance. It is imperative that all obligations under the Convention be met by the States parties. This is necessary in order to secure the credibility and integrity of the Convention.

Most of the victims of landmines are innocent civilians with no connection to the conflict which initiated the deployment of the mines. We are dealing with real people here: children, women and men. Human beings must be the focus of all humanitarian mine action. Our purpose is to stop human suffering as a result of the use of landmines.

Mr. Yamamoto (Japan): In collaboration with the international community, Japan has vigorously addressed the many aspects of mine action: mine clearance, mine awareness, victim assistance, the destruction of stockpiled landmines and advocacy. However, it is a stark reality that countless landmines remain to be cleared and the number of landmine victims is still reportedly at least 150,000 a year, many of whom are women and children. Given the fact that the remaining landmines continue to hamper post-conflict rehabilitation and development and to pose a serious threat to human security, it is imperative to strengthen our commitment to tackling landmine problems.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with the Assembly some of the efforts that the Government of Japan has made in the realm of mine action.

In essence, Japan has maintained a comprehensive dual-track approach consisting of endeavours to achieve a universal and effective ban on landmines, on the one hand, and strengthening assistance for mine clearance and victim assistance, on the other. I am therefore pleased to see that the number of States parties now stands at 122 and hope that other countries will join the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction at the earliest possible stage. In this connection, it was a great honour for Japan to have facilitated the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention held in Managua, Nicaragua, in September, as a Vice-President of the Meeting and as Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, Socio-Economic Reintegration and Mine Awareness of the Convention.

In the fields of mine clearance and victim assistance, Japan has continued to make considerable financial contributions through a variety of multilateral and bilateral channels. For instance, it distributed a total of $5.7 million in the last fiscal year to a range of mine-action projects around the world. Furthermore, fully appreciating the initiatives taken by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), as described in the reports of the Secretary-General, Japan has contributed nearly $10 million to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, managed by UNMAS, over the past four years.

Together with these financial contributions, the Government of Japan has striven to support a variety of mine-action activities. Today, let me focus on four particular areas to which Japan has attached priority.

First, the protection and education of women and children under armed conflict is of great importance. With a view to reducing injuries among children by providing high-quality information and conducting educational activities, Japan has made a contribution to facilitate the development of the international standards for mine awareness education.

Secondly, it is crucial to assure the safety and security of deminers. For every 1,500 landmines cleared, one deminer is reportedly victimized. I would like to pay the highest tribute to the great dedication of deminers, who sometimes sacrifice their safety or even their lives so that others may be safe. From this viewpoint, my Government has decided to continue to support the revision, production and dissemination of the information materials concerning safety to be used by deminers and other beneficiaries.

Thirdly, Japan has long attached great importance to victim assistance. Not only must medical and psychological assistance and artificial limbs be provided, but employment opportunities must be created and assistance extended to achieve reintegration into society. These are the keys to enhancing the well-being of landmine victims and, on the basis of this belief, Japan has supported projects on victim assistance in Cambodia and Afghanistan.

Fourthly, the great role that civil society can play should be duly acknowledged. The Government of Japan has supported Japanese as well as international and local non-governmental organizations in their efforts to tackle mine-related issues.

Let me briefly touch upon our support for Afghanistan as one of the neediest countries. Over the last 13 years, Japan has contributed a total of $21 million to various mine-related activities in Afghanistan, including mine-clearance projects managed by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan and victim assistance overseen by UNMAS. Despite the current fluid and complex situation on the ground, long-term prospects for reconstruction and development are also to be taken into consideration when providing emergency humanitarian assistance. In particular, clearance of landmine and unexploded ordinance is crucial to expediting the repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons and the training of personnel and victim assistance are important keys for the effective rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country. The Japanese Government is therefore determined to continue its support for mine action in order to facilitate long-term stability and development in Afghanistan in the post-conflict phase. It is hoped that other stakeholders in the international community will join in this endeavour.

Finally, mine clearance and victim assistance, along with a comprehensive ban on landmines, are prerequisites for ensuring human security. Based upon this view, the Government of Japan reaffirms its commitment to the global fight against landmine problems in collaboration with other members of the mine action community, in order to achieve the goal of zero victims and make the Earth safer for our children and the generations to come.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) *(spoke in Spanish)*: In recent years, the political will to eradicate anti-personnel mines has undoubtedly increased. It could not be otherwise, because anti-personnel mines are odious weapons that claim innocent victims among the civilian population — especially children — more than 100,000 victims per year.

That is why, when we confront anti-personnel mines, just as when we confront terrorism, there can be no ambiguity. Either we eliminate them, or we accept them with all the physical and psychological damage they cause. In Peru, as with the terrorism of the Sendero Luminoso, we have decided not to be ambiguous with regard to anti-personnel mines: we have destroyed our arsenal.

On 13 September, Peru completed the destruction of its arsenal of 321,368 anti-personnel mines. The destruction of the arsenal has been carried out with the support and verification of representatives of the international community, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society. We have thus complied with Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention more than a year before the mandatory time limit of four years established by this juridical instrument.

In addition, today we are fully coordinating with the police forces in removing the mines from the 1,400 high-voltage power-line towers that we had to protect during my country's fight against terrorism. To date, the removal of mines has been completed in 242 of those towers.

With the valuable cooperation of the Governments of Canada, Japan and the United Status and of the Organization of American Status, Peru is continuing with the demining of its border with Ecuador. This process has been completed on four kilometres of the nine that constitute the mined area along that border.

Furthermore, we have agreed with Ecuador to establish a zone free of anti-personnel mines between our countries. We have also pledged with Chile to continue to comply with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention. Chile and Peru have reaffirmed their commitment to eliminating the mines on their common border as soon as possible.

Peru has been widely recognized by the international community for the special attention that it has given to destroying its arsenals and demining. In fact, at the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, which was held in Managua, Peru was commended for having disposed of its arsenals in much less time than expected and also because, as the result of our experience with mine clearance, we have offered technical cooperation to other States that need it, since we have developed a low-cost explosive technology that is easy to transport and has few residual and polluting effects.

Our anti-mine policy does not end with the demining of our own territory and our borders. We will continue to fight against anti-personnel mines and their harmful effects, and that is why a Peruvian mine action centre will soon be established in Lima. It will be called "Contraminas", and its goals will include the promotion and full implementation of the Ottawa Convention. This centre will operate as a body within the Ministry of Foreign Relations.

Our mine clearance policy is part of a most ambitious objective of Peru's foreign policy, namely, to reduce weapons expenditures in South America in order to devote those resources to social investment. Through this policy, we wish to make Latin America — which was the first nuclear-weapon-free zone — the first anti-personnel-mine-free zone. As a first step towards this Latin American objective, Peru is coordinating its efforts with those of the other Andean countries to declare the Andean region an anti-personnel-mine-free zone.

Mr. Al-Awad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is meeting once again to consider the agenda item on Assistance in Mine Action. We take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his exhaustive report on this topic.

As a country that has been a victim of mines and their danger, the Sudan supports all international efforts to eliminate the danger posed by anti-personnel landmines. Since there are many civilian victims in the Sudan, we were among the first countries to sign the Ottawa Convention against anti-personnel landmines. We also participated in all international and regional conferences on mine clearance. Our delegation welcomed the entry into force of the Convention in March 1999. We also welcomed the conclusions reached by the meeting of the States parties, held in Managua, Nicaragua, in September 2001. In this regard, we also support the Government of Nicaragua's efforts to make that conference a success. We also welcome the contents of the report, which tells us that anti-personnel landmines, their stockpiling and transfer have been considerably reduced since the Convention's entry into force.

The Sudanese delegation has taken due note of the fact in the report that the United Nations system has drawn up a five-year strategy on anti-personnel landmines and demining activities. We hope that the departments involved will take into account the views of countries affected by mines in a fully transparent manner, as necessary.

Paragraph 57 of the Secretary-General's report indicates that mines continue to be found in conflict areas in southern Sudan. In this connection, the Government of the Sudan respects the Ottawa Convention both in letter and in spirit. The terrorist rebel movement is responsible for planting these mines. The rebels have ignored all warnings against planting mines. They have placed mines in a number of areas in southern Sudan thereby reducing economic activity, especially in agriculture, because people have had to leave their homes to save their children's lives and their own.

We welcome United Nations efforts to increase awareness of the danger of mines, particularly through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Refugees, the United Nation's Children's Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which are working alongside the Sudanese National Demining Committee and the Sudanese Red Crescent. This is reflected in the Secretary-General's report. In this context, we also welcome the efforts to set up a mine action unit within the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan, in order to continue mine-awareness efforts and to offer assistance to victims.

As a signatory State of the Convention on landmines, we hope that all the signatory countries will

receive equal treatment regarding demining assistance. Resources, equipment, technology and adequate financial sources should be channelled appropriately in order to help the efforts of demining in affected countries.

As part of demining activities, we have set up a national network, under the auspices of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, that brings together all organizations involved, for example, the Commissioner for Humanitarian Assistance, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of the Defence, representatives of voluntary and non-governmental organizations and all United Nations bodies and specialized agencies in Khartoum, to discuss all aspects linked to the fight against and the elimination of landmines, as well as to managing their social and economic effects and providing assistance to victims. This national network on mines also provides expertise and advice to governmental institutions responsible for making decisions related to special landmine policies. Establishing this national network demonstrates the Sudanese Government's desire to include all relevant actors involved in demining activities in order to take decisive action on this matter.

Mr. Mubarak (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt had always attached special interest to issues related to landmines. This can be attributed to the fact that Egypt is one of the States most affected by the problem of landmines, estimated at around 23 million mines and unexploded ordnance spread throughout an area of more than 280,000 hectares of Egyptian soil. The continued presence of these landmines, which were planted by the warring parties in the famous battle of El-Alamein in 1942, not only hinders all efforts to develop this area, but also poses a constant threat to its inhabitants, having claimed the lives of more than 8,000 people, including women, children and the elderly.

In the light of these circumstances, our handling of landmine-related issues stems from real suffering and from the destructive effects that these mines have had on our citizens over the past 50 years. We have handled this on the basis of a sincere desire to create a secure and enabling environment for citizens living in mined areas — areas that also have enormous development, tourist and agricultural potential.

In order to deal with the devastating effects that I have just mentioned and drawing on our limited financial capabilities, our authorities began in July 1991 and continue to work on an ambitious plan to clear our terrain of these landmines. Here I wish to emphasize several key points.

The implementation of this plan places a heavy technical and financial burden, which cannot and should not be confined to the Egyptian Government, which bares no responsibility for planting these landmines. There is an urgent need for the States responsible for planting these mines to submit accurate maps and detailed information on them and to offer assistance in clearing them.

The cost of mine clearance has increased substantially as a result of geological changes, in particular sand movement, which has further obscured most of these landmines throughout the years. Mine clearance requires advanced technology.

The spread of such a great number of landmines over vast area of our lands has crippled all our attempts to utilize the abundant natural resources in this area for the development of the western Sahara.

In line with our continuous efforts to face the problem and effects of landmines, the Egyptian Government had been cooperating for the last three years with the United Nations Mine Action Service. This cooperation was crystallized by sending a United Nations mission to Egypt from 9 to 23 February 2000 to study and assess the landmine problem there.

On 7 July 2000, following that visit, the United Nations issued a comprehensive report on the issue that included practical suggestions and clear guidelines on how to deal with the problem. Egypt will continue its consultations with the United Nations Secretariat and the States concerned in order to activate mine-clearance action taking place in Egypt.

On the other hand, during the year 2000, Egypt had succeeded in putting together a sophisticated mechanism for organizing the essential administrative and technical base for dealing with the problem. This was achieved by creating a high-level national committee to supervise the whole mine-clearance process. The committee includes members from different Ministries and related authorities and is currently working on a number of mine and ordnance clearance projects. It also maintains close contact with the United Nations Development Programme in this area.

We take note of the Secretary-General's report on assistance in mine action (document A/56/448). While welcoming such an annual report as a tool for heightening international awareness of the landmine problem in general, we notice that it has not taken our situation into consideration as one of the States most affected by landmines. This is not in conformity with the report's purpose and basic role.

We believe that the United Nations mine-action strategy for 2001-2005 (document A/56/448/Add.1) is a retreat from the United Nations policy adopted in 1998. It lacks sufficient detail about the needs of affected States. We wish to reaffirm here that a United Nations strategy in this domain must take into account the needs of Member States that are most affected by landmines. We believe that the Secretary-General must seek the views of Member States on this proposed strategy and then review it in the light of the views expressed.

Finally, with regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — namely, the Ottawa Convention — we would like to assert once more that, in spite of our support for the humanitarian purpose of the Convention, Egypt, like many other States, continues to have numerous reservations, as has been highlighted in many other international forums. That is why we are calling for a more thorough study of the landmine issue in the international negotiating forum directly related to the problem — namely, the Conference on Disarmament. This should be done with the aim of overcoming the shortcomings of the Ottawa Convention, principally ignoring the primary responsibility of States that have planted landmines in the territories of other States to assist in removing them; not providing for the necessary assistance in that regard; and not paying any attention to the right and responsibility of States to secure and defend their national borders.

The path to a world free of landmines is a long and arduous one that requires that the international community contribute towards the expense of achieving such a ban. For this reason, we favour economic development and the saving of the lives of the thousands of people claimed every year.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): During the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Managua on 18 to 21 September 2001, one of the most poignant testimonies was given by a priest whose young son was severely injured when he accidentally stepped on a landmine. As the priest cradled the boy in his arms, trying desperately to assuage his pain, his eyes roamed the area, and he saw a sign about three feet away from where the explosion had taken place that ironically proclaimed for all to see: "National Sanctuary." It seems that in this sad case, as in thousands of other similar sad stories around the world, there is no sanctuary from the indiscriminate effects of anti-personnel landmines, especially for innocent civilians who are often the unfortunate victims.

These immense humanitarian concerns remain one of the main driving forces behind Thailand's commitment to the Ottawa Convention on banning landmines and to the eventual establishment of a mine-free world. This commitment manifests itself through our concrete action at the national, regional and global levels.

At the national level, through the efforts of the Thailand Mine Action Centre, we have completed the destruction of 117,557 landmines in stock this year and plan to destroy the remaining stockpile by April 2003, as required by the Ottawa Convention. Our efforts in the area of mine clearance are spearheaded by three humanitarian mine action units created in 1999 to demine the infested border areas. Plans are both in place and in the pipeline to support victim assistance and to promote mine-awareness programmes.

We believe that the effectiveness of national efforts would be greatly enhanced if complemented by regional cooperation activities. Thailand, therefore, in cooperation with Handicap International, and with the assistance of Switzerland, Germany and Norway, took the initiative of hosting the first-ever Regional Conference on Mine Victim Assistance from 6 to 8 November 2001. The Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar also participated as observers in this landmark event. Such conferences encourage the adoption of regional approaches and cooperative ventures to help find the most effective and feasible means for victim assistance.

On the global front, Thailand will continue to play an active role in the Ottawa process. Indeed, we would like to encourage others who have not done so to do likewise. For our part, we are proud to serve as co-

Chairman of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention for the period from 2001-2002, and we will work together with all concerned to advance the goals of the Ottawa Convention.

None of the aforementioned activities could have had any significant impact on the landmine problem without cooperation and assistance, either bilateral or multilateral. The resources and expertise that we possess are never enough to achieve all that we want to do — namely, to rid Thailand of the scourge of landmines.

Meaningful partnerships between affected countries and the international community, including international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and the provision of adequate assistance and appropriate expertise to those in need, must therefore be part and parcel of a global cooperative endeavour to create a mine-free world and to alleviate the suffering of mine victims, because, ultimately, the responsibility for mine action can only be a shared one.

Thailand is appreciative of the assistance that we have received thus far from the international community in the area of mine action. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Norwegian People's Aid, just to name a few, have lent a helping hand in mine-action activities, such as conducting impact surveys in Thailand. The United Nations Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) have assisted in the development of an information management system for mine action. Many other countries, through bilateral programmes, have played their part. We wish to take this opportunity to express our profound thanks to these actors for their participation and contributions.

The partnership between mine-affected countries and the international community must continue, however, and the assistance flowing from such a partnership must be sustained if we are to keep the momentum towards the ultimate establishment of a mine-free world. Such partnerships and assistance should by no means be confined to State parties to the Ottawa Convention alone. Until we make the Ottawa process universal, partnerships and assistance should be extended to all mine-affected countries.

As to our region of South-East Asia, while being aware of particular concerns of States, Thailand hopes that one day all of South-East Asia will be fully part of the Ottawa family. In this connection, we were gratified to see many countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) attend the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention in Managua at such a high level. We hope that this positive trend will continue and bear fruit. But until the day that the Convention is universally accepted, we pledge to work closely with all South-East Asian countries to tackle the multifaceted challenges that landmines pose to our peoples and to our security, and call on the international community to extend to all the mine-affected countries in the region their cooperation and assistance.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and useful report submitted in document A/56/448, which has given us a detailed picture of recent mine action and of the activities planned for the period ahead.

We were encouraged to learn that a number of advances were made in 2001, including direct support to 30 countries and the formulation of a five-year strategy for mine action, in spite of the fact that the financial base is not yet as solid as it should be.

In this connection, we hope that the Secretariat will continue to consider provisions regarding the financing of the Mine Action Service, so that it will be possible to obtain the needed resources to continue to implement the different projects already under way and those planned for 2002, without having to depend to such an extent on extra-budgetary contributions.

We were impressed by the level of coordination and cooperation that has been established between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, and by the various activities, new programmes, seminars and training courses that have been carried out.

We also attach genuine importance to the work done in the area of information, both in continuing to improve the Information Management System for Mine Action and in preparing the Electronic Mine Information Network (E-MINE), which we hope will serve adequately to provide the data needed.

Uruguay, which has participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations for half a century, attaches great importance to the landmine and unexploded ordnance safety project that is being coordinated by the Mine Action Service, and also to the material that has been published, i.e. safety manuals, videotapes and brochures, and the training courses that have been carried out. We hope that the United Nations Office for Project Services will continue to carry this project out and, if possible, increase its scope.

Uruguay's specialized military personnel, which has been cooperating in many mine actions in different countries, has training and equipment that we hope will also be useful in this field. Our country shares the objective that, at the national and global levels, every effort must be made to reduce the production and use of landmines.

It is for this reason that on 4 May of this year the Government of Uruguay promulgated law 17,327, which incorporated the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction into our national legislation.

We also attach special importance to the preparation in early 2001 of a plan for a rapid emergency mine-action response capability, building on lessons learned from support provided to missions. It is obvious that this plan will make it possible to ensure greater efficiency in the activities that will be conducted. This is why we completely support it.

For all of these reasons, Uruguay supports the draft resolution that has been introduced and that we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Laurin (Canada): On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for again providing a comprehensive report on mine action. We commend the United Nations system for its efforts, and we extend our gratitude to all United Nations personnel who have worked tirelessly on this important matter over the past year.

Once again the Secretary-General has highlighted the central issue before us: while significant progress is being made to address the terror of landmines, many challenges remain. It is not incidental that the main challenges are in those States or areas where the Ottawa Convention has yet to be accepted.

Through its unequivocal ban on anti-personnel landmines and its provisions on cooperation and assistance, the Ottawa Convention provides the international community with a comprehensive framework to address the global landmine problem. More than 120 States have now formally accepted this important humanitarian instrument, but more must be done to convince non-States parties to forgo this insidious weapon. We are pleased, therefore, that a priority has been placed on advocacy against the use of anti-personnel mines.

Of course, United Nations efforts in mine action go far beyond advocacy. As the Secretary-General has duly noted, the United Nations plays a leading role in all of the following areas: global coordination and resource mobilization, emergency and ongoing assistance to mine-affected countries and areas, information management and quality management, training and standards. During the past year, the United Nations has proven through its commitment that it is the indispensable coordinating centre of our common efforts.

We note with appreciation that the United Nations system provides direct support to 30 countries. In addition to that continued work, the United Nations has demonstrated in Croatia and Kosovo that its support can and should ultimately reach the stage where high levels of international assistance can be significantly reduced over time.

With respect to information management, quality management, training and standards, we applaud the work of the United Nations and partner institutions such as the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The completion of international standards for mine action, the further deployment of the Information Management System for Mine Action and the enhancement of the training of mine-action personnel contribute to improvements in how the global community addresses the global landmine problem. The recent establishment of the Electronic Mine Information Network has provided the world with an efficient electronic gateway to a broad range of mine-action information.

When an organization undertakes as many activities with as much global reach as the United Nations does, it is easy to find areas to criticize. Some

will argue that the system is too slow in responding or that the procedures for internal coordination are still unwieldy. But on mine action the United Nations has confronted a global terror in a practical manner with great initiative. It is time that all of us recognized that we are all partners in a common cause. Our shared sense of urgency obliges us to work together in this common effort.

Partnership is a theme that resonates through the Secretary-General's report. Partnership within the United Nations is evident through the activities of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action and through examples such as the fruitful relationship between the United Nations Mine Action Service and the coordination by the United Nations Children's Fund of the Mine Awareness Working Group. The United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs has ably supported meetings of States parties to the Ottawa Convention and is the key instrument in ensuring the effective transparency of reports submitted under that Convention.

Canada is a partner of the United Nations in mine action on several fronts. Over the past year we have worked closely in areas such as stockpile destruction. We helped in the development of a Web site on that theme. We also provided support to the United Nations landmine and unexploded ordnance safety project and we continue to support the Database of Mine Action Investments.

Partnership has been especially evident over the past year in the development of the United Nations mine-action strategy for 2001 to 2005. That strategy, which we heartily support, has emerged from extensive input from mine-affected and donor countries, field programmes, non-governmental organizations and expert agencies. The strategy is both timely and prudent. It sets out global targets and specific objectives for the United Nations.

Partnership with the private sector is another important area identified in the Secretary-General's report. Providing avenues for individuals, organizations and corporations to contribute to our common cause is an important element in ensuring the sustainability of mine-action efforts. In that regard, I am pleased that the Canadian private sector has become actively engaged in the United Nations Development Programme's Adopt-A-Minefield campaign through the Canadian Landmine Foundation's Night of 1,000 Dinners initiative. Through that initiative, thousands of people worldwide will host or participate in fund-raising and awareness events on or around 30 November 2001.

In addition to sharing a common cause in addressing the global landmine problem, we have a shared responsibility to the memory of those killed as a result of the use of these weapons, and an obligation to assist the victims of landmines. The sad example of Afghanistan, terrorized by landmines in the course of more than two decades of conflict, compels us to reflect on the immediate medical and other needs of landmine survivors and on their social and economic reintegration into their societies. Meeting landmine survivors — most of the civilians and almost half of them children — is the best way to dispel forever the myth of the "responsible use" of landmines. It is the most powerful way of convincing all States that an outright ban on this weapon is the only feasible way forward.

In working towards a world free of the terror of landmines, the keys to our success to date have been our continued partnerships with the United Nations system, with the non-governmental community, with international humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and with concerned States and institutions worldwide. Through the leadership offered by the United Nations, we can enhance those partnerships and move forward collectively and collegially. Through the moral suasion of the Organization, we can expand upon our success to date. We can make the Ottawa Convention the standard of universality and comprehensiveness necessary for the total eradication of the scourge of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The international community has voiced its concern about the problem of anti-personnel landmines and has made tireless efforts to put an end to that problem, from which the entire world has suffered and will suffer for decades until the necessary resources, international determination and political will are forthcoming to put a final end to it. In spite of progress over recent years, endeavours in this sphere have constantly been thwarted. The whole world understands the danger of landmines and their use in war and other armed conflict, in view of the large number of people killed or wounded by these weapons over the past hundred years.

The number of landmine victims exceeds that of the victims of nuclear attacks. But although States have been gradually reducing nuclear arsenals, they have been developing new types of anti-personnel mines, for example those shaped like children's toys, radios, pens, lighters and other small items. This terrible weapon is the most hideous one employed against human beings: mines do not distinguish among adults, children, women, innocent civilians and armed soldiers. It is an insidious weapon that remains on the ground or in the trees to trap, mutilate, handicap or maim people. This means that treatment and rehabilitation require considerable financial and psychological resources.

The real tragedy when mines are used in warfare and armed conflict is that even when conflicts are resolved, wars come to an end, soldiers go home and the cause of the war is forgotten, mines remain a buried, concealed, permanent, daily threat to thousands of men, women and children. Civilians who return to their homes, fields and homelands to live in peace after conflicts have ended are unaware that a hidden enemy awaits them.

A mine is detonated somewhere in the world every 20 minutes. The number of monthly casualties totals around 500 killed and more than 1,200 injured according to some estimates. More than 120 million mines are hidden in forests, deserts, mountains and fields. More than 70 countries are awaiting decisive international action to put an end to this problem once and for all.

The Arab and African regions are among those most affected by mines. In Africa, more than 50 million mines have been laid in 18 States. These mines have maimed approximately 30,000 people, mostly women and children. They are also an enormous obstacle to economic and social development in Africa. Last year's Africa-Europe Summit in Cairo emphasized the need to strengthen efforts to free the African continent of mines, promote an awareness campaign on their dangers, develop the capability of affected countries to eliminate these mines, help and rehabilitate victims and provide the necessary financial and technical infrastructure in these countries.

In the Arab region, 13 countries face this problem, including my own country, Libya. A number of conferences and seminars have been held, some under the aegis of the League of Arab States, to consolidate regional and local efforts to deal with the problem of mines and their harmful impact on economic and social development.

Libya suffers from the problem of mines laid during the Second World War. Past reports of the United Nations mention that Allied and Axis forces left millions of mines and pieces of explosive ordnance in North Africa, which have remained for over 50 years and have taken thousands of innocent victims. In addition, the problem impedes the development of the mine-contaminated regions and the efforts to combat desertification, build roads, exploit natural resources and reclaim agricultural land. These mines are the responsibility of the warring countries that planted them to serve their own military interests without concern for the effects the mines would have on others. That is why international and regional organizations have supported our just claims that these countries should take responsibility for clearing these mines and for paying compensation to the victims.

This is particularly true since the problem of mines is a complex one with many aspects. First, each belligerent State laid its mines in a different way. Secondly, the mine casings can be affected by natural elements, mainly pollution, which makes them much more sensitive and causes many more casualties. As a result, advanced technology is needed to clear such mines and render them ineffective. Thirdly, the mines found in desert areas cannot be easily removed because they have been dispersed due to shifting sands, flash floods and other factors.

My delegation wishes to recall the historic agreement concluded between Italy and Libya in 1998 on cooperation between the two countries for mine action in Libyan territory. It called for paying compensation to the victims, creating a joint fund for the rehabilitation of affected areas, assistance to the handicapped and setting up a medical centre to treat victims maimed by mines.

I should like to express our pleasure at last week's meeting of the technical committee to create a mechanism for the implementation of the agreement, which contains a number of operational steps, including a project on mine clearance and the provision of training for Libyans in detecting mines and other vestiges of war in order to rehabilitate and develop mine-affected areas.

We hope that the Italian side will assume its responsibilities in other areas, including the creation in

Libya of an information centre and data bank containing technical and historical information and documents, aerial photos of the mine fields and maps of the mined areas. This important agreement between Italy and Libya is an excellent precedent. We would call on the other two States that laid mines in Libyan territory during the Second World War to follow Italy's example and conclude similar agreements with my country so that we can be assisted in putting an end to the problem of mines — which has existed for more than 50 years now — and to compensate the Libyan people for the damages they have suffered from these mines.

My country supports the international community's campaign to eliminate the problem of mines and the efforts of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and regional and international organizations, headed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, to alleviate the human suffering caused by these mines, to deal decisively with this complex problem and to provide the necessary assistance and resources for combating it.

We fully support the noble objectives of the Ottawa Convention. However, we believe it lacks certain elements: there is no mention of the legal responsibilities of the States that laid mines in the territory of other countries or the legitimate right of the countries affected to appropriate compensation in accordance with international law. In this connection, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for the periodic report he submitted to us today in document A/56/448. We note from the report that some progress, however slow, has been achieved in the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen these operations. The number of affected countries receiving direct support from the United Nations increased from 26 to 30 last year. In addition, international standards for mine clearance have been established under the auspices of the United Nations in order to take advantage of the accumulated experience of international bodies in mine action. The United Nations is also trying to draw lessons from its own experience in some countries in order to deal with mine-related emergencies and to improve information systems on mine action. The United Nations Development Programme also supports other new mine action programmes in other countries.

We also note the success of the campaign for assistance and contributions organized by some non-governmental organizations. This has to be expanded, and new ways have to be found to enlist the participation of civil society and the private sector in order to provide the necessary resources for those countries affected by mines.

In this connection, we would like warmly to thank the United Arab Emirates for its consolidation of the demining programme in southern Lebanon and for enhancing national capabilities in this regard. I should like also to stress what was stated — quite rightly — by the Secretary-General in paragraph 51 of his report, that as long as conflicts continue mine action will still continue. The report emphasizes that Afghanistan, one of the countries most affected by mines and exploded ordnance — particularly since the bombing of Afghan territory with all kinds of weapons, such as cluster bombs — will exacerbate the problem, particularly since 23 per cent of the weapons used in this war have not exploded, including smart weapons. These military actions force civilians to leave their land and to live in snow-covered areas that are replete with dormant mines and other kinds of unexploded ordnance, which is extremely lethal. Thus speedy international assistance to the Afghan people is needed in order to help them cope with this problem.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to refer to the United Nations strategy for the period 2001-2005 that is mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action. It is an attempt to devise a specific strategy to cope with the mine problem at the global level. We would request the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to reconsider that strategy, so that it might reflect the real needs of all of the mine-affected countries, and so that the United Nations can meet this challenge effectively and successfully so as to build a world of peace, security and tranquillity.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): Israel is deeply aware of the grave humanitarian consequences of the irresponsible use of landmines. Accordingly, the Government of Israel attaches particular importance to actions aimed at preventing and minimizing human suffering in this regard.

We long for a day when civilian life will be free from the threat of anti-personnel landmines. The haunting echoes of shots fired long ago and of conflicts raging miles away have no place in civil society. They are a tragic outgrowth of war, striking the innocent, shattering civilian lives and tormenting families. Yet in the shadow of tragedy a glimmer of hope arises: people

from different nations, who clashed on battlefields yesterday, are clearing the minefields of today.

This, indeed, captures the most important theme of the effort against the devastation of anti-personnel landmines: cooperation. The report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action (A/56/448) reaffirms the realization, barely 10 years ago, that action by individual States alone could no longer defuse the humanitarian threat posed by anti-personnel landmines. This cooperation is even more relevant in post-conflict situations.

It should be emphasized that landmines are creatures of context. They are born in an atmosphere of terror and threats, just as they are weakened in the context of cooperation and goodwill between States.

Israel has taken concrete steps to reduce the proliferation and harmful effects of anti-personnel landmines in the Middle East and beyond. These steps include the following.

Israel has ceased all production of anti-personnel landmines. In 1994, it unilaterally declared a moratorium on the export of all types of anti-personnel mines. The moratorium was declared in recognition of the grave humanitarian consequences associated with anti-personnel landmines and the need, in this respect, for self-imposed restraint. In 1999, the moratorium was extended for an additional three-year period.

Israel ratified amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and submitted to the United Nations its first national annual report, in accordance with article 13, paragraph 4, of the Protocol.

Israel considers the issue of international cooperation in the areas of mine clearance, mine awareness and mine-victim rehabilitation to be of major importance. These initiatives contribute to the global efforts aimed at the alleviation of the humanitarian problems associated with mines.

In this context, for the past six years Israel, in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has been involved in a mine-awareness project conducted in Angola which aims to educate the local population in different regions of the country as to the hazards of mines. Israeli involvement in this project has been upgraded this year, and currently four Israeli volunteers — financially supported by Israel — operate in the area. Israel has also substantially increased its financial contribution to that project.

The same policy can also be an important confidence-building measure. In this regard, Israel conducted, in 1997, a joint mine-clearance project with Jordan, in the Arava valley, in order to enable the agricultural utilization of the area. Similarly, in 1998, Israel, Jordan, Canada and Norway joined in a quadrilateral project aimed at mine clearance in the Jordan valley and at the medical rehabilitation of Jordanian mine victims. In this respect, Israel organized and hosted a workshop on the rehabilitation of mine victims in April of that year.

We believe that the measures Israel has taken will contribute to stability in our region. Israel also remains confident that the best way to achieve the ultimate goal of a total ban is through confidence-building measures such as cooperation in demining and reconciliation between past adversaries, which serve as a basis for future regional stability, security and peace.

Let us hope that the cooperation that has been illustrated here will likewise heal the world of the devastation caused by these devices and put an end to the hostilities that perpetuate them.

Mr. Lee Kie-cheon (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for having prepared a comprehensive report highlighting the achievements attained so far and the challenges that lie ahead in mine-action assistance.

Since the issue of mine action was adopted as an agenda item of the General Assembly in 1993, substantial progress has been made in international efforts to tackle this problem. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, there has been greater public and political awareness of the landmine problem in recent years. As a result, the production and use of anti-personnel landmines is on the wane, a de facto moratorium on the transfer of such weapons is coming into being, a number of areas have been demined, and millions of stockpiled landmines have been destroyed. Most importantly, there has been a significant decline in the number of mine-related casualties.

While that progress is laudable, we must not lose sight of the current reality. Landmines continue to pose a deadly threat to innocent civilians in conflict and post-conflict areas. Among the many victims are

women and children. Moreover, mines not only claim lives, they also impede socio-economic development, reconstruction efforts and humanitarian aid operations, as well as the return of refugees and other displaced persons. Throughout the United Nations system the work of many agencies has been encumbered by the presence of these insidious weapons.

Clearly there is a need for the international community to better address the plight of those in mine-affected countries. In tackling the problems associated with anti-personnel mines, a comprehensive approach is essential. Such an approach should encompass mine clearance, emergency assistance, mine awareness and resource mobilization.

The United Nations system, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO), regional organizations and national Governments have become increasingly involved in mine action activities. My delegation is pleased to note the emergence in recent years of public-private partnerships for assistance in mine action, as well as the development of new mechanisms for enhanced coordination among donors and agencies.

In that context, I would like to stress the importance of the central coordinating role of the United Nations in generating synergy among diverse actors. In particular, my delegation would like to commend the efforts made by the United Nations Mine Action Service, which has served as the focal point for international mine action activities. We also appreciate the important work being carried out by other United Nations agencies, most notably the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Let me take a few moments to comment on some of the latest developments in mine action summarized in the report of the Secretary-General.

First, my delegation welcomes the development by the United Nations of a concrete mine action strategy for the period 2001 to 2005, in response to General Assembly resolution 55/120. We consider this medium-term plan to be quite comprehensive and inclusive, in that it takes into account the views of a broad array of partners, including NGOs, international organizations, mine-affected countries and donor countries. By articulating common objectives and tangible goals for the United Nations mine action effort, it provides a viable framework for tackling the landmine problem strategically on both the national and the global levels.

Secondly, we commend the progress made by the United Nations in terms of operational support. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, the United Nations now provides direct support to 30 countries, including new assistance programmes and emergency programmes initiated by UNDP. Those programmes have highlighted the need to develop a mine action emergency response plan.

Thirdly, recognizing that a comprehensive information management system is essential for effective mine action, we note with satisfaction that the Inter-Agency Coordination Group recently endorsed the Information Management Policy for Mine Action. In particular, we are encouraged by the further development and deployment of the Information Management System for Mine Action, which is now in place in 17 countries, as well as the launch of an Electronic Mine Information Network (E-MINE) this past September.

In March 1999 we witnessed the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention, which aims at a total ban on anti-personnel mines. We also saw the entry into force of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which restricts the use of anti-personnel landmines. My delegation shares the view that the mine-ban Treaty provides a comprehensive framework for many aspects of mine action. However, Amended Protocol II also includes a humanitarian aspect, in that it bans the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines. In our view, those two mechanisms should carry equal weight in dealing with mine problems.

The Republic of Korea is committed to the global effort to protect civilians from the scourge of landmines. This year, my Government acceded to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Amended Protocol II. The Korean Government has, since 1997, also faithfully implemented an indefinite extension of its moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines.

Furthermore, the Republic of Korea recognizes that one of the prerequisites for effective action is a substantial resource base, and has consequently supported various United Nations-led mine assistance programmes. Our Government has been participating in the Mine Action Support Group and has made annual

contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action. We share the Secretary-General's view that the United Nations should secure sound funding so as to meet growing requests from mine-affected countries. With that in mind, my Government will continue to make due contributions to this noble cause.

The Republic of Korea shares the concerns of the international community over the immense human suffering endured by those in mine-affected countries. We believe that only through concerted efforts and cooperation by the international community, with the United Nations as the focal point, will people in mine-affected countries be free to pursue their lives without fear of being struck by mines. I can assure the Assembly that the Republic of Korea will continue to take part in international efforts for that purpose.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): Every year my country takes part in the discussion on this agenda item, and will continue to do so as long as this problem exists. The Republic of Croatia has direct experience with the disastrous effects of mines, and therefore attaches the utmost importance to mine action assistance. My country welcomes all efforts leading towards a global ban on anti-personnel landmines and the elimination of existing stockpiles. We therefore support the commitment of the United Nations to facilitate this process and we wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for providing such a comprehensive report on assistance in mine action.

It is estimated that Croatia has approximately 1.2 million anti-personnel landmines and other unexploded ordnance scattered over 4,000 square kilometres of its territory. Mine affected areas have not been used for many years and pose a major economic problem for the Government, as mines obstruct infrastructure development and reconstruction and the return and integration process. Missing maps for existing minefields present an additional obstacle in the mine-clearance process. I would therefore like to repeat my call on all those who are in a position to provide us with those maps to do so without further hesitation.

To engage in the mine-action process takes not only courage and time, but also substantial financial assets. The Croatian Government provides about 80 per cent of the funds required for implementing the national demining programme, including World Bank loans and other credit lines. Unfortunately, due to the sheer magnitude of the problem, and even with all the donations and loans that have been granted, Croatia will not be in a position to meet all the remaining needs and complete the programme as planned. I therefore implore all donor countries to support our efforts. At this juncture, I would like to express our profound gratitude to all those individuals, organizations and countries that invested their valuable time and gave their financial support for the benefit of mine-action efforts in Croatia.

The development and implementation of new, sophisticated technologies in mine detection is expected in the near future. We hope that this will accelerate the mine clearance procedure, lower its cost and increase its reliability and safety. In this respect, a Croatian team of experts is seeking ways to devise the safest and most cost-effective projects to facilitate efficient mine action. The Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) is currently running several projects, involving research and development. CROMAC has also set up a test field, with the aid of the European Commission, in which it has tested 29 different metal detectors. CROMAC also runs tests on several demining machines.

Most of us would agree that the conclusion of the Ottawa Convention in 1997 was a turning point in facilitating mine action throughout the world. Much has been done in the meantime, but more needs to be accomplished. We call upon those States that remain outside the framework of the Ottawa Convention to join the majority of the world's States and work together to eradicate these weapons.

Croatia looks to the follow-up of the Ottawa process to act as a catalyst for genuinely advancing mine action in all its aspects. It was precisely the humanitarian nature of the Ottawa movement that enabled it to make so great a contribution to the creation of political will and readiness to support this praiseworthy initiative. On the basis of our own experience, we firmly believe that more forceful action is still required at the national, regional and global levels.

At the national level, Croatia has already enacted legislation confirming the validity of the Ottawa Convention, and is making the final preparations in drafting new legislation on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines in all their aspects. When adopted by the Parliament, the new

legislation, the draft of which is being reviewed in the relevant Government ministries, will criminalize the use, production, stockpiling or transfer of anti-personnel landmines. I should like to stress that, until that time, according to our Constitution, the provisions of the Convention will take precedence over our national legislation, and its implementation is therefore guaranteed.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Furthermore, the Croatian Ministry of Defence recently adopted a Dynamic Plan for the Destruction of Stockpiled Anti-personnel Mines, which calls for the destruction of Croatia's stockpiles by October 2002, well before the March 2003 deadline. The initial destruction of stockpiles in the summer of 1999 has not yet been followed up due to the reorganization of the defence sector.

As I mentioned earlier, an extensive research programme is being conducted in the field of mine action in Croatia, and the scientific breakthroughs that will certainly result will undoubtedly be of benefit in the further fight against this scourge.

Croatia will continue to work hard with all interested countries in supporting the Ottawa Convention in the next phase. At the recent Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, in Managua, Croatia made a further contribution by assuming, together with Australia, the co-chairmanship of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction.

At the present time, when the United Nations finds itself at the threshold of a new era, entrusted with a broader responsibility for the world's affairs, we are counting on its continued leadership and coordination in the process of eradicating the scourge of landmines. I can assure the Assembly that Croatia will remain actively engaged in this process.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus welcomes the Secretary-General's report on assistance in mine action, as well as the coordinating role played by the United Nations in this area.

As a State whose territory was the site of intensive hostilities during two world wars, Belarus fully shares the mine-related humanitarian concerns of the international community and, on the whole, supports the initiatives aimed at prohibiting the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Our country does not now produce, nor has it ever has produced, anti-personnel landmines. In 1995, Belarus signed a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. This moratorium has been extended through the end of 2002.

At present, the Republic of Belarus is not ready to adhere to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition, Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, since it does not yet possess the financial and technological resources needed to fulfil the basic requirements of that document — that is, the demining of the territory of the country and the destruction of the existing stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines.

Belarus continues to suffer from the consequences of the Second World War. Large quantities of remaining unexploded ordnance, including anti-personnel landmines, still kill and maim the civilian population. On average, up to 7,000 items of unexploded ordnance, including anti-personnel landmines, are detected and destroyed in Belarus every year. The last complete demining process in Belarus was conducted in two areas from 1992 to 1994. More than 3,000 hectares of territory were cleared and almost 130,000 items of unexploded ordnance were detected and destroyed. No complete demining process in the territory has been conducted since then because of the lack of financial resources.

The Republic of Belarus is experiencing serious problems with regard to the destruction of considerable stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines left in the country after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Special technologies are required for destroying these landmines. These technologies will help us to avoid a new ecological disaster in the country, which, for more than 15 years, has been dealing with the widespread radioactive contamination that resulted from the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. There are no such technologies in Belarus.

Belarus strictly abides by its obligations under international agreements in the field of international security, non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. We gained experience in eliminating conventional armaments under the terms of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Despite the heavy financial burden, our country, working almost on its own, without outside financial assistance, fulfilled

its international obligations and eliminated almost 10 per cent of all the heavy military equipment destroyed in Europe under this Treaty.

It was precisely that experience that led us to take a very careful and responsible approach to adhering to the Ottawa Convention. The process will be implemented stage by stage and will be closely synchronized with the financial and technological assistance we obtain for demining and the destruction of stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. Belarus will be able to fully adhere to the Convention when it becomes clear that our country is able to destroy its stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines within the time limits established by the Convention.

We are interested in receiving international assistance for the further demining of our territory and for the destruction of stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines, and we would welcome any relevant proposals and initiatives on cooperation in these fields.

Information on the need to render assistance to Belarus in these areas was given to the participants in the international workshop on mine-related problems organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and held in Minsk in March 2000, as well as to the representatives of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) who visited Belarus on an assessment mission in August 2000. The report on the results of the UNMAS assessment mission made reference to the conclusive need to assist Belarus in demining its territory and destroying its stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the Republic of Belarus, while not a legal party to the Ottawa Convention, implements its requirements in practice and is not a source of mine-threat proliferation.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic.

At the outset, we wish to thank and congratulate the Secretary-General and the staff of the Secretariat who drafted the report on assistance in mine action in document A/56/448 and its addendums 1 and 2. The report contains complete information on United Nations policy on mine action, on progress achieved by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international and regional organizations, and on the work of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and other demining programmes in this area.

In the report, which was prepared pursuant to a request made by the General Assembly in resolution 55/120 of 6 December 2000, we see the main innovations and achievements of, as well as the problems encountered in 2001 by the international community in its mine action, giving priority to intersectoral issues that affect all who are interested in the fight against landmines: global coordination and mobilization of resources; assistance to national and local authorities; emergency assistance; information management; quality control, training and standards; and publicity activities. The Secretary-General stresses the fact that

> "Significant progress has been made over the past 12 months in the field of mine action, particularly in terms of strategic planning, operational support, coordination and information management". (*A/56/448, para. 2*)

The report indicates that the United Nations system is now providing direct support to 30 countries, four more than in 2000, and that, while new programmes have been launched, two of those begun earlier have reached a stage at which it is possible considerably to reduce the level of international and United Nations technical assistance. While pointing to this progress, however, the Secretary-General also indicates the concern of the international community at the fact that landmines continue to be sown in various countries.

Another new element of the past 12 months is that, under United Nations auspices and with the instrumental support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, a review has been prepared of the International Standards For Humanitarian Mine Clearance Operations published in 1997. The Revised International Mine Action Standards take into account the experience accumulated over the past four years and cover activities which previously had not been addressed, such as mine awareness and stockpile destruction.

After a number of countries of the Central American region managed to lay to rest the spectre of the civil wars that afflicted their populations in the 1980s, their authorities, with peace already a reality,

invited the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1991 to participate in and support a mine-clearance programme, undertaken as a clear sign of the will of their peoples to put the conflicts of the past behind them and to begin a new phase of progress and economic and social development.

In response to that appeal, the OAS created the Assistance Programme for Demining in Central America (PADCA), with the support and advice of the Inter-American Defense Board. In spite of some difficulties, such as its temporary stoppage because of the fury with which Hurricane Mitch struck the area, the Programme has developed with great success, enjoying the solidarity of the other States members of the organization and of the international community as a whole. In an effort to cover all the aspects of the problem of anti-personnel landmines, the OAS expanded the PADCA and created the Comprehensive Action against Anti-personnel Mines (AICMA) in 1998, within the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy. This programme incorporated PADCA and is a focal point for the OAS in other sectors related to mine action.

The programme is mainly humanitarian in nature, as it seeks to restore the safety and trust of citizens, reducing and to the greatest possible extent eliminating the threat and danger of anti-personnel landmines and other explosive devices, and restoring land use in affected areas to agriculture and livestock-raising. This has been a multilateral programme, with the participation, in addition to the OAS, of other international organizations and various donor States. Its implementation has enjoyed the participation of the authorities and civil society of the Central American countries concerned. Four Central American countries have enjoyed the assistance of the OAS programme: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The programme provides a significant amount of logistical support and necessary equipment to the countries affected. The technical equipment includes mine detectors, protective clothing and other specialized equipment that allow the safe detection and destruction of anti-personnel landmines, giving the confidence necessary to the deminers in carrying out their work. Other types of support that are also part of the comprehensive AICMA package include complementary rations, life insurance and medical coverage.

Each of the countries that benefit from the programme contributes its own demining staff and units. The number of deminers supporting the operations has grown to almost 900 in Central America, because the need to widen the effort has become obvious. The countries affected by anti-personnel landmines have provided logistical support commensurate with their national capacities, such as medical, emergency and evacuation services in case of accidents suffered by programme staff.

Approximately 30 international supervisors are provided through the Inter-American Defense Board, which includes the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela. Other countries, such as Canada and the United States, have through their military personnel provided periodic training or technical advice on demining and stockpile destruction. International military monitoring activities, training and technical assistance are coordinated through the Assistance Mission for Mine Clearance in Central America, based in Managua, Nicaragua.

In Honduras, mine-clearance tasks began in September 1995. Since then, 10 operations modules have been created. As a result of these operations, many affected regions have been gradually cleared, recovered and handed over to local authorities for development. In November 2000, Honduras became the first State member of the OAS entirely to eliminate its stockpiled mines when the Honduran army destroyed its reserves of almost 8,000.

In the case of Costa Rica, demining operations on the Nicaraguan border began in October 1996. With AICMA support, the Ministry of Public Security is undertaking demining and public information activities in order to prevent accidents among the civilian population. Since Costa Rica has no stockpiled mines, the conclusion of demining operations will make the country a zone free of anti-personnel landmines.

As a follow-up to the signing of the peace agreements in Guatemala, the OAS developed a support programme for mine clearance and undetonated devices in 1998. The national programme is the national responsibility of the Coordinating Commission of the Congress of the Republic for Demining. Likewise, in this new project, the following have joined the effort: the Association of Volunteer Firefighters, the Guatemalan Army and the

demobilized members of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit.

The Guatemalan operations are more than unique in the OAS programme, because the main threat comes from 8,000 unexploded devices, including mortars, artillery shells, bombs and hand grenades, which are dispersed throughout the Guatemalan territory. The demining process requires extensive cooperation among the three operational components, as well as coordinated communications efforts with the population of the affected areas, to locate and destroy these dangerous devices.

Thus far, the greatest challenge for demining in Central America has been in Nicaragua. The Government of Nicaragua has reported approximately 135,000 mines that were buried in the country during the 1980's. Among the mined areas, there are electrical towers, bridges, communications installations and hydroelectric plants, as well as the borders with Honduras and Costa Rica. Although Nicaraguan Government officials have reported the elimination of more than 62,000 mines, at present approximately 73,000 mines have yet to be located and destroyed.

In addition, as follow-up to the signing and ratification of the Ottawa Convention, the Nicaraguan Army has destroyed 90,000 stockpiled anti-personnel mines. The OAS and members of the international community have supported the destruction of the stockpiles through international experts who have observed the process.

Since 1997, in collaboration with the Government of Sweden, Nicaragua has been involved in a pilot programme to support the physical and psychological rehabilitation of mine victims. Through this programme, more than 300 persons who lack social security or other insurance benefits have been helped with transportation from their communities to a centre for rehabilitation for lodging, food services, therapy, prostheses and medication.

El Salvador is another country in the region afflicted by the scourge of mines, which was a grave problem to be resolved after the signing of the peace agreements so that the country could return to normalcy, especially in the areas of former conflict. In El Salvador, the Government, in cooperation with the armed forces, the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, made major efforts to finance on its own a demining programme that was concluded successfully in 1997, when the United Nations certified that the programme had been 97 per cent completed.

The OAS programme has continued to make progress and has taken up two other countries, Peru and Ecuador, whose common border contains some 130,000 anti-personnel mines, according to OAS statistics. In the Central American programme, new technologies have begun to be used, and with the support of the United States, trained dogs are being employed to detect anti-personnel mines. This has increased the quality of the system. With the support of Japan, a mechanical mine-clearance team will be working in Nicaragua.

The national efforts of the Central American countries require continued international support to successfully complete their mine-clearance tasks and to achieve a Central America free of anti-personnel mines. If all continues to go well, the OAS programme will be satisfactorily completed in four years, as scheduled.

The Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention was held in Managua from 18 to 21 September this year. In view of the international situation following the barbaric terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, the delegates of more than 90 States in Nicaragua at that distressing time gave a vote of confidence to peace, to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and to civilization, and resoundingly rejected hatred, the law of the jungle and mad, cowardly violence.

The Managua Declaration reaffirms, *inter alia*, the unwavering commitment of the parties to the Convention to the total eradication of anti-personnel mines and to coping with their brutal and inhuman effects. Likewise, it appeals to all States that continue to use, produce or acquire anti-personnel mines to put an end to that activity immediately. As for the States that have already declared their commitment to the purposes of the Convention, the Declaration urges them to recognize that the continued use of these mines is a clear violation of their commitment.

In broad support of the Convention, more than 120 ratifications and 21 signatures have been received, including from more than 40 States affected by mines. It was also recognized that the new international norm established by the Convention was a demonstration of

success in the Convention's fulfilment, including the conduct of many States that are not parties to the Convention but respect its provisions.

All of humanity will celebrate the day when States clearly demonstrate the will never again to produce or plant another anti-personnel mine. The Central American programme is an example to be followed by other regions of the world affected by this scourge of our time.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The Ottawa Convention set forth as an international obligation the demand to eliminate anti-personnel mines, which cause grave harm to civilian populations and whose harmful effects persist for decades, even long after the conflicts that led to their use are resolved.

Our region is among those that have best responded to this commitment, since almost all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are parties to this instrument. The Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace, and a number of resolutions of the General Assembly of the OAS, also seek to make this region a zone free of anti-personnel mines.

The entry into force of the Ottawa Convention gave the international community a valuable legal instrument to make progress in disarmament by prohibiting a category of weapons, as well as to strengthen the principles of international humanitarian law. For this reason, it is essential that those countries that have not yet signed the Convention do so as soon as possible, with a view to facilitating the coordinated and effective action of the international community.

Argentina is gratified that the most recent report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action (A/56/448) concludes that in the last 12 months, considerable progress has been made in mine action, especially as regards strategic planning, operational support, coordination and information management.

Argentina ratified the Ottawa Convention on 14 September 1999 and presented its second report on transparency measures on 30 May 2001, reflecting the determination of our country to fulfil its obligations under the Convention in a process that works towards the definitive eradication of anti-personnel mines from our territory.

In that report, Argentina expresses the fact that there are anti-personnel mines on its territory, in the Malvinas Islands. The position of our country on the mines that are there is contained in the interpretive statement that was made when the Convention was ratified. This fact was reported to the United Nations Secretariat when information was provided in the framework of resolutions related to assistance in mine clearance. On 11 October 2001, in Buenos Aires, the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reached an agreement through an exchange of notes, under the sovereignty safeguard formula, in order to conduct a feasibility study on demining in the Malvinas Islands.

Demining in the world has become an extraordinarily important humanitarian task. Countries that are afflicted by the existence of mined land must also confront the great deterioration in economic and social conditions, the paralysis of their healthcare and sanitation systems and the paralysis of their national infrastructure. Anti-personnel mine clearance is a priority and necessary task for public safety, economic and social development and the protection of human life.

International effort is aimed at financial and technical cooperation among donor countries and contributors to the various national demining programmes developed throughout the world. As part of this effort, Argentina is contributing advisers and experts in mine clearance who conduct training in demining operations.

Argentina firmly supports the objectives of international organizations in mine clearance and encourages the initiatives of specific governments aimed at strengthening international cooperation.

However, the total prohibition of anti-personnel mines must be directly linked to cooperation in mine clearance and assistance to victims. This is where Argentina stands with the contributing countries, providing human resources able to share their full expertise and training in mine-clearance tasks. Awareness of the humanitarian context, particularly the technical context, of this task calls for the participation of Argentina's military in demining throughout the world and encourages our country to continue its work in this direction.

The Training Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the mobile training teams are the most important

contribution being made by our country. They are open to ongoing cooperation on the basis of the a priori recognition that mine clearance is the great task of us all.

As the report on transparency measures under the Ottawa Convention makes clear in the section on the status of stockpile destruction programmes, the Argentine army has begun to consolidate its stockpiles. The destruction plan will be carried out during 2002. The navy will begin its destruction plan at the end of this year, and it will last 11 months.

Technical assistance for mine clearance in Angola, an offer to contribute to demining along the border between Peru and Ecuador in the framework of the Military Observer Mission, the participation of an Argentine army engineer corps in the framework of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) and the work of Argentine military experts in Central America are some of the concrete actions carried out by Argentina in the context of international aid and cooperation for humanitarian demining.

Special mention should also be made of Argentina's contribution through the so-called White Helmets initiative. This institution brings together volunteer experts in humanitarian assistance, who are recruited in various countries and are made available to the international community, through the coordination of the United Nations, to be called into service by affected countries or multilateral organizations.

Argentina believes that the indiscriminate injury and the high percentage of civilian victims resulting from the use of anti-personnel landmines demands the urgent and unreserved commitment of all countries. That is why we encourage the United Nations to continue its mine action efforts and to focus resources in those areas where the work of the Organization is most effective and necessary.

Mr. Gasparic (Slovenia): Slovenia has associated itself with the European Union's statement on assistance in mine action. Since my country pays special attention to human security, and to demining and mine-victim assistance in particular, we would like to share with the Assembly additional thoughts and information on assistance in mine action.

Landmines kill and maim innocents, regardless of age and long after conflicts are over. Landmines cannot recognize peace. They continue to obstruct normal life and livelihood. They are a heinous threat to human security and a formidable obstacle to social stability and prosperity.

It is very encouraging, therefore, that the efforts invested in mine action are starting to bear fruit. There are fewer mine victims, fewer minefields and fewer mine stocks on Earth already. The 1997 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and to Ms. Jody Williams to remind us that it is quintessential persistence that brings results. Hence, we must not give in to complacency now; rather, we must keep striving to protect future generations from the misery that mines bring.

Slovenia signed the Ottawa Convention in 1997 and ratified it in 1998, and we are determined to destroy our mine stocks by 2003. We have already destroyed around 50,000 landmines, which amounts to more than one third of our stocks. We have also started the internal procedure to adhere to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Slovenian foreign policy pays great attention to human security, and we are fully committed to the objectives of international mine action.

In this spirit, the Government of Slovenia has established the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance to support post-conflict rehabilitation in South-Eastern Europe, where a large quantity of mines remaining from conflicts are taking high tolls. They have also prevented refugees from returning, the population from resuming normal life and economic activity from reviving.

The International Trust Fund has become, during three years of operation, the most cost-effective mine-action organization in the region. The International Trust Fund has established genuine partnership with the authorities in mine-affected countries and with international structures involved in mine-action projects, in particular United Nations structures. The International Trust Fund has cleared two thirds of the territory demined so far in Bosnia and Herzegovina and has spread its activities to Croatia, Albania, Yugoslavia and, most recently, Macedonia. The International Trust Fund has cleared over 7 million square metres of mine-contaminated land at a cost as low as $2.50 per square metre.

The International Trust Fund has attracted generous donations from the United States and a large

number of important European donors, including the European Union.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank all donors for their valuable support. We would like to inform them of our continuing commitment to the activities of the International Trust Fund and to reassure them that their donations are applied in the most effective and transparent manner. They represent an enormous difference and new hope to affected communities. They bring back life without fear.

Afghanistan serves as a fresh reminder today of how mine affliction may contribute to a vicious circle of misery with tragic and far-reaching consequences. Mine action in Afghanistan is investment in local and regional stability, as much as it is investment in our own security. Let us keep mine action working for us.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item this morning. We shall continue to hear speakers in the debate on this item this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.61

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

61st plenary meeting
Wednesday, 21 November 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 38 *(continued)*

Assistance in mine action

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/448 and Add.1 and 2)

Mr. Sun (Cambodia): Once again on the General Assembly's agenda this session is the issue of landmines. We continue to address the problems caused by these devices, which currently pose a serious threat to more than 60 countries worldwide.

On behalf of the delegation of Cambodia, I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Assistance in mine action" contained in document A/56/448, which addresses the continuing problem of landmines and provides us with an opportunity to assess the progress so far achieved by the mine-affected countries and the assistance provided by the world community in the area of mine action. My thanks and appreciation are also extended to members of the United Nations Secretariat, especially the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and its Mine Action Service and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and, most of all, to the non-governmental organizations and the international community for their continued and determined efforts and cooperation to help achieve progress in this humanitarian action.

I need not repeat that almost three decades of conflict had a severe impact on the economy and infrastructure of Cambodia, mainly in the north-western part of the country, and left innocent people, especially women and children, to face the tragic consequences of the millions of landmines and unexploded ordnance that lie buried in the soil. Being one of the most heavily mine-contaminated nations in the world, Cambodia has continuously taken significant steps in its development efforts to reduce the risk of landmine accidents.

With the support of the international community, the Cambodian Mine-Action Center (CMAC) has evolved into the largest demining explosive ordnance disposal operation in the country, and the progress made so far is encouraging. As one of the largest demining institutions, CMAC is gaining the momentum needed to sustain the confidence and trust of the Government and the donor countries. With its renewed objectives, effective from the year 2000, its motto is "Saving Lives and Supporting Development for Cambodia". CMAC is committed to improving effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and productivity, and has been the primary provider of surveys, mapping, technical training, mine-awareness campaigns and even development of demining technology within the country. As a result of both mine awareness and demining operations, the number of mine victims has been significantly reduced. The monthly rate of

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casualties has dropped from 200, in 1996, to around 80, in 2000. CMAC's overall achievements, from its inception in 1992 to December 2000, include clearance of more than 81 million square metres of land and destruction of more than 700,000 mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). During last year, the figures indicate that on the 8.4 million square metres of land contaminated by mines and unexploded ordinance, almost 62,000 mines and unexploded ordinance were destroyed.

Despite all these developments, Cambodia still has one of the highest accident rates of mine and unexploded ordinance in the world. With an estimated 4 to 6 million mines and unexploded ordnance buried in the soil of Cambodia, clearance of mines and unexploded ordinance remains an essential activity, which is one of the highest priorities on the agenda of the Royal Government of Cambodia. Moreover, mine and unexploded ordinance awareness programmes are being conducted by socio-economic teams that seek to assess the value of demined land and to educate vulnerable groups living in areas with mines, and the community at large, about landmines and unexploded ordnance and their potential danger. At the provincial level, the newly established Land Use Planning Unit (LUPU) has put various strategies in force in order to eliminate land disputes and see that the land cleared by CMAC is put to proper use, as intended. Today, the living standards of the beneficiaries of such lands have improved, and the rate at which land that has been cleared is being abandoned has diminished since 2000.

Last year, due to the suspension of external support, CMAC embarked on an extensive and painstaking reform process, which is a remarkable achievement. The reform is designed to enhance CMAC's vision, to make it more productive and responsive to the needs of Cambodia, promote transparency and make Government inspections and other independent evaluations more open. As a result of such reforms, including its institutional decentralization, CMAC has undertaken several bilateral projects sponsored by donor countries and development organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Trust Fund. These projects operate in high priority settlement areas along the western borders. Our achievements also include the establishment last year of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAVAA), an institution set up to manage, coordinate and regulate the mine-action sector. In this context, UNDP will support the CMAVAA in preparing an institutional development and capacity-building plan and the development of a national mine-action strategy over the period 2001-2005.

In joining the international efforts, Cambodia sent a small demining team in 1999 to Kosovo as part of its contribution to the peacekeeping operation. We are pleased to have been one of the organizers of an exhibition in Tokyo in July and August this year, at which non-profit organizations called for the removal and abolition of the estimated 60 to 70 million remaining landmines worldwide. We look forward to sharing our experience in the field of demining, if requested, with other countries affected by war and landmines, including future nation-building efforts in Afghanistan.

Since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999, we note with great interest the efforts and progress made by the world community in the campaign against landmines worldwide. As a State party to the Ottawa Convention, and bound by the amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, my country will continue to join in the global effort in this unflagging crusade devoted to the elimination of landmines throughout the world. At the Third Meeting of States Parties held in Managua in September this year, we noted with satisfaction the progress made so far by countries in dealing with anti-personnel mines and in reducing the number of mine accidents, as well as the progress made in decreasing the number of mine producers.

Despite progress made, we believe that landmines continue to pose a dire threat to human life and constitute a challenge to development efforts worldwide, especially in the most affected countries. In this connection, Cambodia appeals for continued international support to continue tackling this humanitarian problem. We also take this opportunity to extend our deep gratitude and appreciation to all donor countries and international agencies, including non-governmental organizations, for their generous financial and technical assistance to Cambodia.

In light of the Secretary-General's report on assistance in mine action (A/56/448), we believe that a multilateral approach in addressing mine-related issues at the national and global levels would be a positive

step. We firmly believe that the medium-term plan for the period 2001-2005, as endorsed by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group in September 2001, should be enforced in the countries affected by war, integrating all elements of mine-related issues. We share the view that the United Nations' goal of intensifying its efforts, nationally and globally, will not only serve to free affected countries from landmines but also significantly encourage countries to halt and renounce the use of such devices, so hazardous and destructive of human lives.

To conclude, I wish to state that Cambodia is pleased to be a co-sponsor this year of the draft resolution on assistance in mine action.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): It is indeed an honour for me to address the Assembly on agenda item 38, entitled "Assistance in mine action". I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the timely presentation of his report, in document A/56/448 and Add.1 and 2, which my delegation found very useful.

Zambia considers landmines to be a great hindrance to economic and social development in all affected countries, and especially in developing countries. It is sad that in many parts of the world human beings continue to suffer serious and often fatal injuries from this indiscriminate weapon. Unfortunately, most of the victims are innocent civilians, including women and children. This problem continues long after the cessation of hostilities. For those reasons, anti-personnel landmines have no military value in this high-technology age and should therefore never be regarded by any peace-loving country as the weapon of choice.

I am happy to note that extensive efforts are being undertaken within the United Nations system to eradicate this danger. The draft resolution to be submitted under this item will afford us an opportunity to take stock of our progress in that regard. Zambia fully subscribes to current international efforts to rid the world of this scourge.

After exhaustive consultations, my Government has finally established the Zambia Mine Action Centre, which commenced operations in August 2001. A capacity-building programme is currently under way with the assistance of the Government of the United States of America, to which we owe much appreciation. Training programmes in humanitarian demining, mine awareness and leadership training are currently under way. We would like all our cooperating partners to join the United States in order to improve the efficiency of the programme as we progress towards the implementation phase. The United Nations Mine Action Service, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the International Committee of the Red Cross are making efforts to address the issue of landmines. However, they are greatly constrained by the current United Nations policy in their response to the most serious cases of landmine contamination.

My delegation has noted with some degree of satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/448 and Addenda 1 and 2 and entitled "Assistance in mine action". The Secretary-General deserves commendation for proposing various new initiatives in areas of strategic planning and advocacy. However, the United Nations policy and strategy for mine action set out in paragraph 93 of the report gives priority to countries where landmine contamination is widespread. Our experience with the landmine problem is that even a mere suspicion of the presence of mines condemns large tracts of land.

My delegation is of the view that landmines are a humanitarian concern and that they must be addressed from that perspective. In our country, areas suspected to be landmine-affected have experienced impediments in their socio-economic development. In that regard, all efforts to deal with landmines should respect the fundamental humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity. In order to succeed, the firm action taken by the international community against landmines since 1996 requires additional financial, human and material resources. In that regard, my delegation would like the funding levels for mine action increased and sustained.

With regard to the ongoing implementation programme, I wish to report that Zambia had previously carried out some preliminary surveys to determine areas of possible contamination. We intend to undertake a comprehensive nation-wide survey to improve data on landmines. It is in that regard that Zambia has supported previous resolutions on this item, including resolution 55/120 of 6 December 2000, which, inter alia, emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive information management system for mine action under the coordination of the

Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

My Government has also made it a point to participate actively in all four Standing Committees of the Ottawa Convention, as well as in the meetings of States parties held at Maputo, Mozambique, at Geneva and at Managua. Our determination to address Zambia's landmine problem will bear fruit. I call upon the relevant partners to provide the necessary support. This exercise will free large tracts of land resources, some of which are very fertile, especially in the border areas which were the front lines of the liberation struggle in southern Africa.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating the importance of the Ottawa Convention and of the need to ensure that it is fully implemented. I wish to appeal to all those countries that have not yet signed the Convention to do so without delay.

Mr. **Weldegiorgis** (Eritrea): The report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action (A/56/448 and Add. 1 and 2) highlights the major developments, achievements and challenges faced by the mine action community in the current year. It underlines a number of issues of concern in the fight against landmines. It underscores the critical importance of global coordination and resource mobilization; assistance to national and local authorities; emergency assistance; information management; quality control, training and standards; and advocacy. The report notes the significant progress achieved during the year, especially in the areas of strategic planning, operational support, coordination and information management. It also identifies the challenges posed, particularly by the continuing laying of landmines in several countries, which has grave humanitarian ramifications. The Secretary-General's report is comprehensive, far-reaching and worthy of earnest deliberation. The formulation of a five-year strategy for mine action by the United Nations system represents a significant milestone on the way to a framework for action guided by shared objectives.

My country's experience in the temporary security zone during the second half of this year attests to the importance of the Secretary-General's concept of an emergency response plan to address the immediate requirements of the local population, aid agencies and peacekeeping forces. After the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities by Eritrea and Ethiopia on 18 June 2000 and the subsequent resolutions of the Security Council calling on both countries to facilitate emergency mine action assistance in coordination with the United Nations, mine action operations have been initiated on the basis of a rapid landmine survey.

To meet the urgent need for the rapid and safe return of around a quarter of a million internally displaced persons to the temporary security zone, the emergency response programme focused on mine clearance, awareness and training. I wish to inform the General Assembly that significant progress has been made to date.

The major impediment to further progress remains Ethiopia's refusal to provide the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) with operationally useful information on its minefields, despite its obligations under article 8 of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. As a result, Ethiopian-laid minefields in the temporary security zone continue to claim a heavy toll of human life and property, including UNMEE's personnel and vehicles, and prevent returnees from using their farm fields and grazing lands.

With the generous assistance of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the donor community, Eritrea has taken enormous strides within a very short time in laying the foundation and building the capacity to address the insidious mine and unexploded ordnance problems which afflict the whole country.

Mine clearance is dangerous work conducted in an often hostile environment with lots of hazards to cope with, and it requires considerable resources for training, equipment and logistics. Hence, resource mobilization and adequate funding are crucial to success.

Mine contamination in Eritrea began in the 1940s, during the Second World War. Moreover, virtually the whole of Eritrea was infested by landmines during the 30-year war of national liberation from 1961-1991. The Eritrean Humanitarian Demining Programme cleared about half a million mines from 1991-1998. However, during the most recent war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, there has been a significant reversal, and mine contamination has been greatly aggravated.

Today, there exist approximately two million landmines and unexploded ordnance in Eritrea, a country of 3.5 million people. This translates into almost one landmine per person — one of the highest per capita levels of contamination in the world. We are aware that making Eritrea free from this immense threat to life and property is our national responsibility. Consistent with our State policy of self-reliance, we insist on ownership of the programme and on setting the priorities. With this as our underlying premise, we are working in close cooperation with our international partners to develop the institutional capacity to eventually make Eritrea free of all landmines and unexploded ordnance.

We appreciate the focus of support, particularly from the United Nations, on national capacity-building, as this will enable Eritreans to deal with an Eritrean problem. We, in Eritrea, are committed to the concept of national ownership, providing a national solution to a national problem. Hence, the Government of Eritrea is committed to extending increased support to the mine-action programme as resources become available.

It is evident that the war against landmines in Eritrea has just begun. The first battle — dealing with the emergency situation created by the return of more than 170,000 internally displaced persons to their mine-infested villages, farms and grazing lands in the temporary security zone — is still being waged. We are also set to conduct a Level I landmines socio-economic impact survey in 2002.

Furthermore, we are trying to own a mine-action information management system to collect, compile and manage census data so as to ensure their most efficient use for mine clearance throughout Eritrea.

We are winning this battle, but it takes many successful battles to win a war. Thus, we need continued support from our partners to provide us with the critical resources to wage this war against this deadly enemy. Our recent accession to the Ottawa Mine Ban Convention is indicative of our commitment to make Eritrea mine-free and to join the global struggle for a mine-free world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the decision taken by the Assembly this morning, I now call on the observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Halter (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The international mine-action community has recently made significant progress in its effort to eliminate the threat of anti-personnel mines. The heinous danger of these mines can only be eliminated through the joint efforts of international organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations, experts and the directly affected populations. Thanks to the cooperation of these various actors, the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel mines have declined, millions of square meters of mined land have been cleared and the number of mine accidents and victims has decreased as a consequence. In spite of the concrete and significant progress, millions of mines remain buried in the ground or continue to be stockpiled.

Switzerland recognizes the key role of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system, especially in the field of coordination, policy-making and advocacy. We therefore support the recommendation that the Service be upgraded to a Division and its head be appointed at the level of Director. We also appreciate the valuable contributions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other United Nations agencies in the fight against mines.

Switzerland welcomes the comprehensive and informative report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on assistance in mine action. We especially welcome the transition from a reactive mode in crisis situations to a more systematic and strategic approach at the national and global levels.

Furthermore, we took note with appreciation of the United Nations mine-action strategy for 2001-2005. The six goals that the report's addendum clearly defines are reasonable, though ambitious. In our view, particular attention must be given to local capacity-building and national ownership in order to guarantee the long-term sustainability of mine action. Quality management is crucial in view of the limited availability of financial resources.

Switzerland also welcomes United Nations efforts to encourage countries to ratify international instruments pertaining to anti-personnel mines, to accede to them and comply with them.

Switzerland welcomes the creation of the web-based Electronic Mine Information Network (E-MINE) to support the United Nations Mine Action Service in consolidating mine-related information in order to facilitate the development of mine-action programmes, decision-making, the setting of priorities and the mobilization of resources.

Mine action is one of the priorities of Swiss peace and security policy. In order to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the coordination of such activities, Switzerland provides United Nations Mine Action Centres with human and financial resources. At present, Swiss experts are working in Albania, Kosovo, Azerbaijan and Yemen. In order to ensure adequate personnel support we are in the process of establishing a pool of 40 demining experts for international operations, which should be operational by the end of 2002. In addition, United Nations Mine Action Centres receive material support, in par ular devices for low-risk demolition of unexploded ordnance and mines.

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), which Switzerland initiated and largely finances, provides significant support to the United Nations in the field of research and operational assistance.

It has elaborated International Mine Action Standards under a mandate of the UNMAS, and it has developed the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), which is now in place in over 20 countries. The Centre also supports the implementation of the Convention on anti-personnel mines. In this respect, we welcome the creation of the Implementation Support Unit within the Geneva Centre, aimed at increasing support for the intersessional process.

In the field of victim assistance, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, Switzerland has developed a strategic concept based on a comprehensive approach, which includes not only mine victims but all victims of violence. Only the integration of victims into the wider context of post-conflict reconstruction and into longer-term development cooperation strategies will enable us to find effective and sustainable solutions. Initial valuable experience has been gained in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nicaragua and Mozambique. The next step is to implement the strategy at the national and regional levels. Accordingly, Switzerland held a workshop in Bangkok from 6 to 8 November last that was aimed at establishing the strategic framework at the regional level.

In the field of mine clearance, Switzerland is supporting projects in the Balkans — in Kosovo, Croatia, Bosnia and Albania — as well as in Africa — in Mozambique, Sudan and Eritrea. Special attention is given to cooperation with local partners. The goal is to enable national mine-action centres to develop their own capacities, in an autonomous and committed manner. Switzerland's approach gives clear priority to socio-economic factors and can therefore be easily integrated into longer-term reconstruction, development and peace-building programmes in war-affected countries. The main responsibility in this area lies, too, with the countries directly concerned.

Switzerland is also active with respect to the destruction of stockpiled mines. In June this year we held a one-week workshop in Fribourg that was aimed at providing basic knowledge for the management of national mine destruction programmes. Given the great interest in the workshop, we intend to repeat it next year. As co-Rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction within the mine-ban Convention, we will continue to play an active role in this field.

Switzerland welcomes the important role Geneva plays in mine action, together with New York. Geneva will be honoured to host, in 2002, the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines.

Switzerland will continue to provide the best possible working conditions for the numerous international and non-governmental organizations in Geneva in order to facilitate the fight against mines and their serious humanitarian consequences.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind representatives that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): I would like to speak briefly in response to the remarks made earlier today by the representative of Argentina concerning the Falkland Islands.

We welcome the reference by the representative of Argentina in his speech to the exchange of notes earlier this year between our two Governments, in which we recorded our mutual intention to carry out a feasibility study on the clearance of mines in the Falkland Islands. But we must take issue with his reference to the sovereignty of the Islands. The United Kingdom's position on this issue is well known. It was last set out in detail in my delegation's right of reply to the statement made by the President of Argentina in the General Assembly on 10 November.

Mr. Endrias (Ethiopia): Ethiopia appreciates the role being played by the United Nations and other specialized agencies with regard to their assistance in mine clearance.

As a country suffering from the adverse effects of widespread mines, particularly in areas bordering Eritrea, Ethiopia has been working closely with the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). To this effect, and contrary to the unfounded allegations made by the Eritrean delegation, Ethiopia has already submitted all information, including the map, to UNMEE. Let me add that Ethiopia is in dire need of assistance in mine clearance.

Concerning other issues raised by the Eritrean delegation, we would like to say that these issues are not in line with agenda item 38, which we are currently dealing with.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform delegations that a draft resolution under agenda item 38 will be submitted at a later date.

Agenda item 16 (*continued*)

Election to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(d) Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/516)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In his note, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that he wishes to nominate Mr. Klaus Töpfer for re-election as Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme for a four-year term, beginning on 1 February 2002 and ending on 31 January 2006.

Accordingly, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to elect Mr. Klaus Töpfer as Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for a four-year term beginning on 1 February 2002 and ending on 31 January 2006?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Akinsanya (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on his re-election. We commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for recognizing the enormous contribution made by Mr. Töpfer in the field of environment and development in his first term as Executive Director by nominating him for re-election for a four-year term beginning 1 February 2002.

We believe that Mr. Töpfer has met many of our expectations in his first term as Executive Director. He has been instrumental in building UNEP as a focal point on the environment and in its work in setting the global agenda on environment. Under his guidance, UNEP has worked tirelessly for the promotion of coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, as established in its mandate as defined in the Nairobi Declaration.

Among other things, the Declaration focused on, first, the state of the global environment and regional and national environmental trends, as well as the promotion of international cooperation, including in the area of policy advice and early warning information on environmental threats; secondly, the implementation of agreed international norms and policies and monitoring and fostering compliance; and, thirdly, strengthening the coordination of environmental activities in the United Nations system.

We recognize that Mr. Töpfer has further elevated dialogue on the environment and, indeed, on sustainable development, through effective implementation of the decisions of the UNEP

Governing Council regarding the Global Ministerial Environment Forum and international environment governance. This is an important contribution to the process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and its preparatory processes. Mr. Töpfer's proactive stance on environmental governance is a challenge to United Nations development agencies, which have so far failed to live up to expectations in developing an effective mechanism for the implementation of the development component of sustainable development. We appreciate the fact that Mr. Töpfer acknowledges the dire need for effective sustainable development governance, without which the environmental targets would not be attained.

The delegation of Nigeria commends Mr. Töpfer for his enduring support of Africa and the positive role UNEP played in facilitating the African regional preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, together with other members of the joint expanded secretariat. We are reassured of his support for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification through the opening of the Global Environment Facility as its financial mechanism. We also believe that the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which provides the framework for Africa's sustainable development, will guide the development of the environmental agenda for our continent.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I am sure that I reflect the sentiments of all members in congratulating Mr. Töpfer on accepting his nomination to re-election. I think we all agree that he has performed commendably as Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

We have thus concluded our consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 36

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/454 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.12)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of the Argentine Republic to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.12.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great pleasure for me to introduce, on behalf of the member countries of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, draft resolution A/56/L.12. I would like to begin by stating that, since the issuance of the draft resolution, Angola and Cameroon have become co-sponsors.

In 1985 the African and Latin American coastal States of the South Atlantic undertook to strengthen their relations of cooperation with a view to establishing closer, more active and dynamic relations, and in order to achieve the common goals of social and economic development, environmental protection, conservation of living marine resources and preservation of peace in the entire region. To that end, they decided to create the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. In the 16 years that have elapsed since the establishment of the zone, tangible achievements have been made in strengthening the relations of cooperation among member States in the framework of respect for pluralism and diversity. As a sign of the continuity and importance of that forum, to date we have held five high-level meetings, the last of which took place in Buenos Aires in October 1998.

The draft resolution before the Assembly reflects the main priorities of the zone and summarizes the achievements made thus far.

With regard to peace and security, the countries of the South Atlantic reaffirm once again the importance of consolidating areas in which the threat or use of nuclear weapons is prohibited. In this respect, we reaffirm our commitment to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as envisaged in the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Pelindaba.

Concerning the illicit arms trade, we welcome the successful conclusion of the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The countries of the zone are ready and willing to explore joint initiatives aimed at implementing the Programme of Action adopted at that Conference. The valuable initiatives carried out in recent years by Latin American and African States demonstrate the priority that we attach to that question. Those initiatives are referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the draft resolution.

With regard to paragraph 5, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly and the Secretariat to a revision relating to the small arms initiative taken by the States members of the Economic Community of West African States. In the English version, in the penultimate line of the paragraph, the word "conclude" should be replaced by "further extend", so that the last part of the paragraph reads:

(spoke in English)

> "and the initiatives taken by States members of the Economic Community of West African States to further extend their agreement on a moratorium on the importing, exporting and manufacture of light weapons".

(spoke in Spanish)

Given that one of the objectives of the zone is to achieve a peaceful and negotiated settlement of existing disputes, we call on all States, both members and non-members of the zone, to focus their efforts, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the Organization, on resolving, in a peaceful, just and lasting manner, all outstanding disputes in the South Atlantic. It should be recalled that, in establishing the zone, the General Assembly called on all States to cooperate in the elimination of all sources of tension in the region, to respect the national unity, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of the States of the zone and to strictly observe the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

Argentina wishes to reaffirm once again its conviction that the objectives of peace and cooperation that inspired the establishment of the zone can be attained only to the extent that the institutions of representative democracy function properly and that human rights and fundamental freedoms are duly respected in the countries of the region. In this connection, we would like to stress the important conclusions reached at the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Benin in December 2000.

Furthermore, my country believes that questions of peace and development are interrelated and inseparable. Hence, there is a need to encourage technical and economic cooperation, trade and investment among members of the zone.

Another issue to which Argentina would like to draw attention is the transportation of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and radioactive waste. I wish to stress that the transportation of such material should be carried out in conformity with the appropriate international regulations, in particular those of the International Maritime Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and should take into account the interests of coastal States.

With regard to cooperation in the prevention of drug abuse and the fight against the illicit drug trade, the member States of the zone have committed themselves to broadening and monitoring the exchange of information on issues such as the illicit trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, prevention and assistance programmes, money laundering, and chemical precursors. Combating this scourge will require a concerted effort on the part of the international community.

I should not like to conclude without expressing our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Benin for its generous offer to host, in 2002, the sixth high-level meeting of the States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

Finally, I would like to request all delegations present to take account of the noble goals of the zone and to support draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally revised.

Mr. Moura (Brazil): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/56/454, which gives an account of the views of Member States and the activities of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system with regard to the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. The Brazilian comments are contained in A/56/454/Add.1. We would also like to thank the delegation of Argentina for coordinating the draft resolution before us, and to congratulate it for the work done since the zone's fifth ministerial meeting.

The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic has been recognized by the international community as a valuable mechanism, providing the countries of the two coasts of the South Atlantic with an important framework for concerted efforts in the pursuit of the common goals of peace, social and economic development and protection of the environment. The zone is an instrument that supplements other institutions and arrangements and

provides member States with mechanisms to better coordinate their actions in facing common problems.

The adoption of General Assembly resolutions on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, with a gradual decrease in the number of abstentions in the voting since its inception in 1986, is indicative of the fact that the relevance of this initiative is not confined to its member States, but has a meaningful impact on the promotion of the objectives of the United Nations as a whole.

The Brazilian Government believes that there are priority areas in which the zone's potential can be most fruitfully put into practice, such as the denuclearization of the region, the protection of the marine environment and cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and related offences, as well as the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

No doubt remains that the goal of the complete denuclearization of the South Atlantic region is achievable. The Tlatelolco and Pelindaba Treaties provide a basic frame of reference for this endeavour. All States members of the zone are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Furthermore, cooperation between a denuclearized South Atlantic zone and the countries of the Rarotonga and Bangkok Treaties would make possible the prospect of a southern hemisphere free from nuclear weapons.

With respect to the protection of the marine environment, we understand that the creation of new mechanisms on the issue, within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, would make a positive contribution to the prevention of accidents and the promotion of the exchange of information and of cooperation.

The fight against drug trafficking is another objective to be pursued. To that end, the coordination of efforts within the zone could be decisive. Bilateral agreements between South Atlantic States, as well as multilateral activities, such as the anti-drug initiative launched at the fourth ministerial meeting, are instrumental in fostering the effectiveness of actions undertaken against that form of organized crime.

The Brazilian Government fully shares the concerns of the international community as regards the potentially destabilizing role played by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. To that extent, it is highly commendable that, within the zone, the Organization of American States, the Organization of African Unity, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States have undertaken appropriate initiatives to alleviate that major threat to international peace and security.

In order fully to achieve its goals, the zone needs the continuing support of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme and international financial institutions. The zone's fifth ministerial meeting, held in Buenos Aires in October 1998, once again renewed the commitment of member States to the objectives of the zone. Its final declaration and innovative plan of action adopted on that occasion set out various modalities of cooperation for the common purpose of ensuring peace, security and development. We expect that this process will be further advanced at the sixth meeting, to be held in the friendly nation of Benin.

The zone works as a catalyst for the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among the countries of the Atlantic coast of West Africa and South America. Both sides of the Atlantic can also benefit from each other's experience in the promotion of democratic values, the expansion of trade, investment, and air and sea links and the intensification of South-South cooperation. Brazil attaches great importance to the strengthening of the zone and will continue to work actively with other South Atlantic countries and with the entire United Nations membership for the full implementation of resolution 41/11.

In this spirit, as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.12, just presented by the Permanent Representative of Argentina, we are confident that, as in previous years, it will be supported by the overwhelming majority of Member States.

Mr. Akinsanya (Nigeria): I am indeed highly honoured to address this Assembly on agenda item 36, "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic". I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, contained in document A/56/454 and Add.1.

I should like to pay a glowing tribute to the Ambassador of Argentina for the coordinating role that he has played in the pursuit of our common goal. I also share some of the sentiments of the Ambassador of Brazil, who spoke before me.

The initiative taken in 1986 by the 24 Member States from the two shores of the South Atlantic to create the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic has remained a landmark achievement in the sphere of multilateral initiatives to promote international peace and security. Nigeria, my country, remains committed to the objectives of the zone and attaches great priority to the achievement of the goals identified in the Buenos Aires final declaration of 1998.

Our priority lies in the areas of peace and security in the zone, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and related offences, the protection of marine resources and coastal environment and the promotion of external trade, investment and economic cooperation.

In their pursuit of zonal peace and security, Member States have established nuclear-weapon-free zones in the African region through the Treaty of Pelindaba and in the Latin American and Caribbean area through the Treaty of Tlatelolco. All member States of the zone have also subscribed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a mark of their irrevocable commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free South Atlantic. We also recall the determined efforts of the member States of the zone in 1998, which were crystallized in the establishment of a "dump watch" mechanism for the prevention of the dumping of radioactive and hazardous wastes in the zone.

We note with concern, however, the growing incidence of transboundary movement of wastes and transportation of radioactive materials that could constitute a threat to the marine life of coastal States and to the ecosystem of the entire region. We therefore call on the international community to respect our desire to keep our zone free of nuclear weapons and nuclear-related materials.

Nigeria's long-standing commitment to fostering regional peace and cooperation is well known. We are proud to be associated with the resolution of the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which would have posed serious threats to the peace and stability of the whole region. It is regrettable that conflicts and wars continue to be waged in many parts of the world. We note, nonetheless, with great satisfaction that, in Africa, the process of peace and stability is gradually gaining momentum. We are equally encouraged by recent developments in Burundi, where a newly installed interim Transitional Government is grappling with the challenges of national reconciliation and integration. We urge all parties to the conflict in Angola to remain committed to fulfilling their obligations under the peace accords, the Lusaka Protocol and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Conscious of the dangers posed to the stability of our region by the incidence of small arms and light weapons, we have intensified efforts to rid the region of the illicit circulation and proliferation of these weapons. It is in this regard that we support international efforts to combat and eradicate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects at the United Nations Conference, held in New York in July this year, provides a clear road map for its effective implementation. We also support the call on member States of the zone, as contained in the Secretary-General's report, to explore joint initiatives to implement the Programme of Action in the areas outlined in the report: cooperation in tracing small arms and light weapons; exchange of experience with regard to national systems for the marking and registering of weapons; and the training of competent officials and judicial assistance in this field. Nigeria has set up the National Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which will implement the measures at the national level and will be willing to work with members of the zone in the areas I have mentioned.

Permit me to mention another area of interest to my country in pursuit of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic zone. Member States of the zone remain concerned about the threat posed by international organized crime through the production of and traffic in drugs. As a demonstration of its commitment to dealing with the drug problem, Nigeria has put in place effective preventive and enforcement measures, which have yielded positive results. In addition, global drug-control plans have been initiated within the West African subregion to facilitate the exchange of data and cross-border operations.

Nigeria has been a victim of these perpetrators of illegal activities and is determined to rid itself of this plague. We wish to express our appreciation to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for the assistance given to States affected by

the transit of drugs. The resolution adopted on narcotic drugs at its forty-fourth session on international assistance to States affected by the transit in drugs will no doubt strengthen the work of the UNDCP. We will continue to support international efforts to eliminate from our societies the related scourges of drugs, money-laundering and corruption.

We welcome the adoption by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, at its twenty-fourth session in March 2001, of the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. We believe this instrument, though non-binding, will serve to reduce illegal fishing practices pending the entry into force of the relevant instrument. In this regard, Nigeria and South Africa have entered into a joint naval agreement to strengthen the policing of South Atlantic waters in the African region. We urge Member States in the zone to continue to coordinate and exchange information in monitoring and identifying vessels involved in illegal fishing, especially the long-distance fishing fleets that enter the Atlantic frequently.

We are all aware that changes in the world economy have created tremendous opportunities as well as risks for the economies of most countries in the zone. While we recognize that liberalization and globalization hold great promises of prosperity for developing countries, thus far their impact has been very severe and their benefits have not been evenly shared. Thus, there is a dire need for South-South socio-economic institutions to integrate so as to pool their resources and cushion the effects of the financial crisis being faced by these countries.

In May last year, for instance, Nigeria hosted a meeting on the strengthening of trade ties within the zone, namely, between the Southern Cone Common Market and the Economic Community of West African States. The meeting provided a springboard for further progress in the development of joint activities related to education, health, scientific and academic research, state administration and reform, as well as cultural exchange. We are delighted at this development and support the recommendation that an annual meeting be held in New York at the level of permanent missions to exchange views on a regular basis, coordinate strategies and adopt a common regional position among Member States.

As a sponsor of this resolution, let me conclude by thanking the international community for its continued support and by commending the resolution for adoption by consensus.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally revised.

Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Brown (United States): This draft resolution has a number of very positive elements, including references to the need for control of drug trafficking and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. However, the definition of the zone of peace could, in other contexts, be construed as an attempt to infringe on the freedom of navigation and the right of collective self-defence that are guaranteed under international law.

The United States is particularly concerned with operative paragraph 8 of the draft text. Paragraph 8 implies that the international scheme regulating the maritime transport of radioactive waste is not now adequate. On the contrary, the International Maritime Organization and International Atomic Energy Agency have recently completed a thorough review of this question, made improvements where required and concluded that the current international regulation scheme is fully adequate.

Thus, the United States will call for a vote on the draft resolution and on paragraph 8. We will vote no on paragraph 8, and on the draft resolution itself we will abstain.

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally revised.

Is there any objection to that request?

There is none. I shall therefore first put to the vote operative paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally revised.

I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally revised.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Singapore

Operative paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally revised, was retained by 86 votes to 1, with 1 abstention.

[Subsequently the delegation of Malta informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally revised, as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

United States of America

Draft resolution A/56/L.12, as orally amended, was adopted by 93 votes to none, with 1 abstention (resolution 56/7).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Israel and Malta informed the secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of France, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Brunet (France)(*spoke in French*): As in previous years, my delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/56/L.12. However, my delegation would like to recall certain reservations that it continues to have on the general concept of the zone of peace. These reservations are related to uncertainties regarding the geographical limits of the zone envisaged, the precise nature of the obligations incumbent on the States and the desire to have the rules of international law respected, particularly regarding the use of maritime routes and international airspace.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): No other speakers have requested to speak. May I take it

that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 177

United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, 2002

Draft resolution (A/56/L.13)

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.13.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt)*(spoke in Arabic)*: Among the various economic, social, political and other issues considered by the United Nations, cultural topics are of particular interest because, in the midst of economic interests that may sometimes be contradictory to and divergent with political positions, we note the role of cultural dialogue among peoples as a point of common interest, convergence and cooperation that opens the path for one party to better understand the nature, conditions and characteristics of the other parties.

Therefore, we note the particular importance of the issue under discussion today, because if culture and cultural dialogue play a fundamental role in international relations, the role of cultural heritage, considered human civilization's most valuable asset, regardless of its names or sources, is also important. Cultural heritage is the accumulation of human experiences and experiments that we inherited from our fathers and ancestors, who travelled along the path of civilization recording what they could, according to their knowledge and capabilities, whether by engraving on rocks or by inscription on leather or metal or through verses of poetry or painting on walls. These are all luminous traits that demonstrate the long and difficult path humanity has travelled, with a long series of successes and failures.

Our most basic duty to our ancestors is not only to preserve and protect the heritage they left for us, but also to examine it and extract from it eternal human values and experiences so that it can be a legacy to our children along the path of human civilization.

Today, more than ever, we should refer to our cultural heritage, study it and safeguard it. We should try to identify our common roots in the heritage of other peoples and civilizations. We will undoubtedly find fresh proof of humanity's single source and the single destiny of all peoples of the planet.

This initiative, the proclamation of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, is inscribed in this context. This initiative is being launched today, and, as the Assembly can see, it brings together representatives of the five continents of the world and a wide range of cultures and civilizations.

This is proof of the noble nature of the messages and the objectives around which representatives of the various civilizations and cultures have come together for a single objective: to deploy real efforts to safeguard the common cultural heritage of mankind. The proclamation of the year 2002 as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage goes hand-in-hand with the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972. This is a momentous opportunity to raise world awareness of the need for common action to protect and highlight this heritage, particularly since the number of countries that have ratified the Convention is 167.

The Convention emerged 30 years ago as the outcome of our awareness of the dangers and perils to human heritage in general, not only from the point of view of the traditional elements of time and erosion, but also because of changing socio-economic factors that contribute to the loss of this heritage. This has seriously damaged the treasures of the cultural heritage of many civilizations in various areas of the world. Mankind has lost irreplaceable and priceless cultural property in some regions of the world. The Convention has completed the noble task of fine-tuning a list of 600 sites important to the common cultural world heritage, the world heritage in 122 countries across the five continents.

The international community is cooperating in the protection and enhancement of these sites through action coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO's indefatigable efforts over the past few decades to protect and preserve our human patrimony have made its acronym a symbol of tremendous value for cultural heritage and for signifying the safeguarding of our precious historical, cultural and natural heritage. According to its rules of procedure, UNESCO is in charge of protecting, enhancing and preserving world

patrimony in general, regardless of the location or nature of the asset. We could provide a number of examples of the vital role UNESCO has played in launching many campaigns and projects around the world to save sites that have been threatened by destruction. One campaign especially dear to us in Egypt was the 1960s campaign to save the Nubian monuments in southern Egypt from the flooding of the Nile River.

UNESCO also participated in and concluded a number of treaties on the protection of heritage, such as the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

The far-reaching institutional experience gained by UNESCO has made it the natural forum for coordinating the activities surrounding the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, in collaboration with all Member States, governments and the relevant United Nations organs, as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations.

In introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.13 to the General Assembly today, we call for its adoption by consensus, because it would send a clear message about the international community's real intention to pursue joint action aimed at protecting cultural heritage, regardless of its nature. This could be done through a new project in the year 2002, the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage.

In conclusion, I have the pleasure of announcing that the following countries have joined the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.13: Argentina, Austria, France, Greece, Guatemala, Indonesia, Jamaica, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia and the United States.

Mr. Gosal (Canada): Canada is pleased to support the draft resolution proposing that the year 2002 be proclaimed the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage. We do so in the context of Canada's active participation in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972. The thirtieth anniversary of this historic Convention provides an opportunity for all countries concerned with the preservation of the world's cultural heritage to celebrate what has been achieved and to reflect on future challenges and opportunities.

Many of humanity's treasures must be protected through global action based on the principles of international solidarity and cooperation articulated in the World Heritage Convention. However, this Convention is not concerned only with sites of universal value. Signatories to the Convention also recognize that the responsibility for ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural heritage belongs primarily to each State.

The thirtieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention serves as a reminder of the need to promote adherence to the other international standard-setting instruments that protect cultural heritage: the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols and the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

This past month, the thirty-first session of the General Conference of UNESCO adopted by consensus the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which elevates cultural diversity to the rank of the "common heritage of humanity". The General Conference also adopted a Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and a resolution inviting the Director General to submit to the thirty-second session of the General Conference a preliminary draft international convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. It also launched a new initiative against the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage — an international response to the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas.

(*spoke in French*)

This renewed commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage is the fruit of years of labour. The 1995 report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, "Our Creative Diversity", played an essential role in orienting this work. Drafted under the chairmanship of Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, this document reminds the world community that the rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage our generation inherited is fragile and its resources, for which we are responsible, are essentially non-renewable. The report urges States to pay particular attention to this heritage, including languages, folklore, oral traditions,

indigenous knowledge and local traditions. It draws a parallel between linguistic and cultural diversity and biodiversity, arguing that all are necessary to sustain the reservoir of knowledge and intercultural communication, and that there are "endangered species" in both the cultural and natural worlds.

Despite the short lead time, we believe that 2002 holds promise for world heritage. The impact of this International Year could be further strengthened through cooperation among: agencies of the United Nations system such as UNESCO, the World Bank, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); governmental organizations such as the Council of Europe, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Commonwealth, the Organization of American States, the International Network on Cultural Policy and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee on Culture and Information; intergovernmental organizations dealing with heritage, including the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property; and non-governmental organizations such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites.

Our readiness to engage in fresh thinking and develop new tools to protect our cultural heritage was underlined by various measures taken by many countries in the recent past. The United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage provides opportunities for new approaches through collaboration with the education sector, natural and social sciences, tourism and cultural industries. It can also be a means for strengthening dialogue among peoples, supporting a culture of peace and contributing to sustainable human development.

The United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage would provide Member States with the opportunity to ensure that effective new measures are taken. These could include the adoption of appropriate and up-to-date policies and regulations, the establishment and proper funding of services and institutions, the development of scientific and technical studies and research and staff training.

Mrs. Borzi Cornacchia (Italy): By natural vocation and as a matter of public policy, Italy has long supported national and international efforts to protect and enhance cultural heritage. Thus, we wholeheartedly support the proclamation of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, 2002, and congratulate the promoters of this initiative.

In a welcome coincidence, this initiative falls on the thirtieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, which will also be celebrated next year by a special United Nations Educational, Scientific and Organization (UNESCO) Conference being hosted by Italy. We ascribe special meaning to the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage because it provides an ideal frame of reference for all international legal instruments to protect our cultural heritage, and because of the broad consensus it enjoys in the international community, having been ratified by 167 States — almost as many as the membership of UNESCO and the United Nations itself.

As of a few weeks ago, we can now mention a new legal instrument among those listed in the preamble of today's draft resolution. I refer to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, which was just adopted by the thirty-first General Conference of UNESCO. This new instrument aims to safeguard underwater archaeological treasures, which tell us so much about connections between civilizations and peoples, from the risk of irretrievable loss, market speculation and natural damage. In the near future, we also hope to see an international convention for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage. Following the international conference of experts, held in Italy in March of this year, UNESCO is now working to initiate the process of drafting the text.

My Government is convinced that if we wish to achieve dialogue between cultures and preserve historical memory for future generations, it is not enough to protect the tangible heritage. Instead, we also have to safeguard the fragile socio-cultural heritage that ranges from oral tradition and folklore to the issues envoked by the term "intellectual property." They, too, represent cultural properties, expressive traditions and living knowledge at the heart of a community's identity, visibility, capacity for dialogue and interaction.

Italy hosted the World Heritage Committee in Florence in 1983. This Committee — the Convention's governing body — is responsible for the various international campaigns to protect cultural property, and symbolizes the common cultural values attested to

in the UNESCO World Heritage List. 1983 is also an important year because it marked the start of a concrete international commitment to intervene when damage is done to our shared values, thereby overcoming a traditional reluctance.

In this light, following the bombing of Dubrovnik in 1991, Italy proposed and obtained a resolution signed by 48 States and adopted unanimously by the General Conference of UNESCO appealing to the conflicting parties to protect the cultural and natural heritage and urging them to withdraw from the city of Dubrovnik, which is included in the World Heritage List. In issuing this appeal, the General Conference set a new precedent by intervening more decisively to protect world cultural heritage at risk.

During the follow-up to that important resolution, Italy continued to play a proactive role. Some of the high points were the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of 1992, establishing a more effective system of joint responsibility and cooperation to prevent the illicit circulation of elements of the archaeological heritage within the European Union; the Unidroit Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects of 1995, adopted by a special diplomatic conference held in Rome, fostering international solidarity and strengthening the measures defined in the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970; and the adoption of the Additional Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The success of such efforts is attested to, inter alia, by the presence on the World Heritage List of 690 sites — of which 529 are cultural, 138 natural, and 23 mixed properties — located in the countries of 122 States parties. These efforts were accompanied by a political reflection on intercultural relations and the representation of different cultures on the international scene, with the equal dignity and mutual enrichment and understanding that can be attained through intercultural contact.

Throughout this process, Italy has felt duty-bound to take initiatives aimed at reconciling geopolitical demands and the scientific need to manage the UNESCO sites. In fact, only two years into its term on the World Heritage Committee, my Government relinquished its spot to create an opening for new unrepresented States.

Italy has pledged to enter into a special collaboration with the World Heritage Centre, the operational structure of the World Heritage Committee. It has committed itself to making available both the necessary expertise and almost $1 million in supplementary resources for 2000-2001 towards favouring the candidatures of low-income countries, helping them to manage their sites, and strengthening the Centre's operational system.

Italy has also offered to organize an international conference to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention, believing that this would provide an important opportunity to review and reinvigorate international cooperation between countries equipped with technical and financial resources on the one hand and under-represented and economically disadvantaged countries on the other.

On the occasion of the conference, the Italian Government intends to renew its consistent ongoing commitment to cultural heritage, which is the common heritage of all humankind and an instrument of development, dialogue and cooperation among peoples. Italy therefore confirms its heartfelt support for the proclamation of 2002 as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, for the invaluable role that UNESCO plays, and for United Nations action to strengthen the protection and promotion of our shared cultural heritage.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): Japan has high regard for the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. We therefore deem it most timely that 2002, when we shall celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, is to be designated as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage. Some 170 States parties, including Japan, have already ratified the Convention, and there are about 700 cultural and natural heritage sites all over the world that have been registered as world heritage. Each of those sites is part of the common heritage of all humankind, regardless of its geographic location. However, most are deteriorating and are in danger of being lost. It is therefore important for the international community to work together to make sure that future generations will inherit the treasures of the past.

While recognizing that cultural heritage sites are our common property, I note that each represents something unique, expressive of tradition, philosophy, religion and history. Particularly in this globalizing world, people are taking more interest in understanding and preserving their own cultural heritage as they endeavour to forge a cultural identity. In that regard, promoting education and raising awareness to foster respect for national and world cultural heritage are necessary if we are to further understand and respect other cultures and values.

The Government of Japan highly appreciates the activities undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) for the protection and preservation of the world's cultural and natural heritage, and we expect that UNESCO will continue to play a pivotal role as the lead agency in that area. For its part, through the UNESCO/Japan Trust Fund for the Preservation of World Cultural Heritage, established within UNESCO, as well as through bilateral cultural grant aid, Japan has been actively supporting the international community in its efforts to preserve and safeguard heritage. Both academic and non-governmental institutions are also vigorously engaged in promoting the protection of our common cultural heritage by organizing training courses, seminars and symposiums. It is imperative to transfer technology and expertise to local experts so that they can preserve their own cultural and natural heritage with a view to ensuring sustainable and self-perpetuating preservation. I would like to call on all Member States to join us in sparing no efforts to that end.

I now wish to touch upon our other treasures, namely our natural heritage, which comprises the physical forms taken by the world's diversity and which tells the history of how our planet has evolved. Recognizing that nature and mankind cannot be separated but are destined to coexist, the Government of Japan believes that the international community should make a collective effort to preserve it as well. Destroying nature poses a serious threat to human beings and to human security.

We should not forget the importance of protecting our intangible heritage. Intangible heritage serves as a common ground for the promotion of mutual understanding and enrichment among cultures and civilizations as well as an essential source of cultural identity for each nation. To protect and promote that heritage, Japan has supported UNESCO's activities for safeguarding traditional culture and folklore through the Japanese Trust Fund for the Preservation and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage. We hope that the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage will also provide us with an opportunity to further raise awareness and to promote the importance of intangible cultural heritage.

At its 31st General Conference, held this year, UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The Declaration emphasizes that promoting mutual understanding and cooperation while respecting cultural diversity is essential for peace and for the development of humankind. Cultural diversity is respected when we recognize one other's cultures through the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Japan therefore will continue to extend its cooperation to the preservation of our world cultural heritage. We believe that the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage will provide the international community with another opportunity to foster a spirit of peace, tolerance, mutual understanding and coexistence, as did the International Year for the Culture of Peace 2000, and the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations this year.

Mr. Sagach (Ukraine): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the delegation of Egypt for taking the lead in putting on the agenda of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session an item on proclaiming 2002 as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, and for preparing the relevant draft resolution (A/56/L.13). I should like also to thank all the delegations that have sponsored and actively supported this timely initiative for their cooperative approach.

Cultural diversity is the most precious and delicate treasure granted to humanity. Not only national traditions but also masterpieces of art and architecture — masterpieces of human thought in the widest meaning of that word — have for hundreds of years served nations as an important source and background for maintaining their identity, strength and spirit in the quest for development and prosperity. Centuries have passed, but the heritage created by hundreds of generations has not lost its value. Moreover, as the decades pass, the cultural heritage created by our predecessors appears to play an ever-increasing role in our lives.

Persistent work to protect the historical and cultural values of human civilization is not only a vital necessity for all of us living in the contemporary world. It is also our moral responsibility and obligation, owed to both past and future generations.

On the threshold of the new millennium, humankind faces a threat that my country considers no less dangerous than any natural disaster. This threat has already been described as a crime against culture.

The recent destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan is the most vivid example of such crime, in which religious intolerance, extremism and totalitarian philosophy have resulted in a cultural tragedy for the whole world. Those brutal acts of vandalism were strongly and unanimously condemned by the international community, including, first and foremost, the United Nations Security Council in March this year. I can add other cases of the destruction of World Heritage sites. The list may be prolonged.

These dramatic facts prove the necessity of reasserting the spirit of the World Heritage Convention, which calls upon the States parties to the Convention to protect the global heritage through cooperation, consensus and accord.

Nowadays, about 30 World Heritage properties are considered "World Heritage in Danger". We urgently need to do our utmost to prevent future tragedies by means of our united efforts and enhanced mechanisms for implementing the international instruments aimed at protecting the world cultural heritage. UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee should play the leading role in this endeavour. Ukraine fully supports the activities of UNESCO in strengthening the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. We encourage those States that have not yet done so to become a party to the Convention.

From our standpoint, it could also be appropriate to identify concrete ways for the timely and efficient involvement of the United Nations in cases where the urgent protection of world cultural heritage is required.

There are more than 140,000 historical and cultural sites under State protection in Ukraine. Among them, let me mention the more than 69,000 archaeological monuments, 55,000 historical sites and 15,000 structures of architectural heritage.

As you are well aware, the Kyiv Saint Sophia Cathedral and related monastic buildings, the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, as well as the ensemble of the historical centre of the city of Lviv, have been inscribed on the World Heritage List for cultural values. I would like to underline that an active policy of protecting our cultural heritage is one of the top priorities of the Ukrainian Government in the cultural field.

In 1997, the 29th session of the General Conference of UNESCO supported the initiative of Ukraine to proclaim an International Year of Protection of the World Cultural Heritage. The session of UNESCO Executive Board advised States to bring this issue to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly.

We are pleased to note today that, through our common efforts, notably those by Egypt, the highly important issue of the protection of cultural heritage has gained broad support on the part of Member States. In 2002, we shall mark the thirtieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. Obviously, it is most appropriate and timely to proclaim this year the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage.

Ukraine has the honour of cosponsoring of the draft resolution to be considered by the General Assembly under this agenda item today. We fully support the provisions of the resolution and call upon all Member States to endorse it.

Finally, let me express confidence that, through the united efforts of the United Nations, we shall succeed in reaching the noble goal of protecting and preserving the world cultural heritage for the benefit of the present and forthcoming generations, thus promoting mutual understanding and enrichment among the nations and further enhancing the dialogue between cultures and civilizations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on the list.

The Secretariat has asked me to announce that, apart from the countries listed by the Permanent Representative of Egypt, the following countries have been added as sponsors of this resolution: Finland, Madagascar, the Republic of Moldova, Suriname and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.13?

Draft resolution A/56/L.13 was adopted (resolution 56/8).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 177?

It was so decided.

Programme of Work

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next Monday morning, 26 November, the third item taken up will be agenda item 45, entitled "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)". The fourth item at the meeting will be the report of the Fifth Committee on sub-items (a) to (d) and (f) of agenda item 17, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments".

I would also like to inform the Assembly that the reports of the First Committee will be taken up on Thursday morning, 29 November.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.